MEMOIRS

DAVID C. COOK
THE FRIEND
OF THE
SUNDAY SCHOOL

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Memoirs

MEMOIRS
of
David C. Cook

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David C. Cook

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DAVID C. COOK
THE FRIEND OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

DAVID C. COOK PUBLISHING COMPANY
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FOREWORD

THE accompanying Memoirs of the late David C. Cook have been prepared not as a formal biography, nor as a detailed account of the work which he accomplished for the Sunday-school and religious education in general. Rather, has it been the wish of those who were closest to him to give his friends a better understanding of the man behind the work. The chapters are not merely historic,—matters of dates, places and statistics; they are intimate glimpses of a unique personality, as well as a record of remarkable achievements. They show how steadfast devotion to an ideal, aided by genuine enthusiasm for a cause, led a man triumphantly over obstacles which would have been insurmountable for one of lesser vision of faith. Moreover, this is the story of a life consecrated to the service of God through helpfulness to His children; and, although this friend of the Sunday-school has gone to his reward, we believe it will bring inspiration and courage to those who are still active in the work which was so dear to him.

For these reasons, and with this earnest hope, we present the Memoirs of David C. Cook to the many friends who have waited with such understanding patience during the unavoidable delay in getting the book off the press. If it gives them a better comprehension of the man and his mission, and moves them to more devoted and intelligent service to the Sunday-school, we shall feel well repaid.

Chapter I

Boyhood Days

HE thoughtful student of history is struck by the fact that when some special work for humanity needs to be done, God, in his providence, has a leader ready. When the church of England and America had grown cold and formal, out of a quiet home in Epworth came John and Charles Wesley to rekindle the fires of devotion and service. When the time had come for the darkness of Africa to break, David Livingstone knelt to dedicate his life to the evangelization of the equatorial tribes. God is the Great Strategist; he is never taken unawares. When there is a wrong to be righted, or a truth to be preached, or a work to be done, he has some one ready to do it.

In the middle of the last century the Sunday-schools of America were few and had not, for the most part, been given a warm place in the heart of the church. In many in-

stances there was positive opposition to the movement begun by Robert Raikes in England some time between 1780 and 1783. In one of Marion Lawrance's books is this astounding statement: "The writer has seen, with his own eyes, a church with its door nailed shut by its officers, in order that the Sunday-school might not meet there. . . It is impossible to fix a date when the Church really recognized its responsibility for the school." But as time went on, and intelligence increased, such recognition was quite general.

God was preparing a great advance along the line of religious education in the Sunday-school, and on the 28th of August, 1850, a baby boy was born in the Methodist parsonage of East Worcester, New York. His parents were the Reverend Ezra S. Cook and his wife, Pamala (Milks) Cook. There were other children, but "the last and littlest" fared well in the matter of names, being named for two heroes of Bible times, David and Caleb. Little David's father was an unusually well-educated man, even for that

Mr. Cook's Mother and Father.

learned profession. He was a great Bible student, reading the Old and New Testaments in the original Hebrew and Greek, and being so conversant with these languages that in reading to his children he was able to make a free translation as he proceeded. The mother was a woman of rare sweetness of disposition, great patience and sympathy, with a fine sense of humor. In the course of time Mr. Cook was obliged to leave the ministry on account of a serious trouble, called in those days "preachers' sore throat." He purchased an interest in a woolen mill in East Worcester, but this business venture proved disastrous. The mill failed and the Cooks lost heavily.

After a family council, it was decided to "go West," and there was an exciting period of domestic upheaval which the younger Cooks found most fascinating. Then there followed the long journey to Northern Illinois and the settlement on a small farm near Wheaton. Here the family underwent the usual privations and hardships incident to pioneering. The house in which the Cooks

were obliged to live for a time was small and not well built. Doorcasings and window-frames did not fit. In winter so much "bracing prairie air" came in that if wood had not been plentiful the family might have suffered from cold. Over the main room of the house was an attic reached by a ladder, and thoroughly ventilated by means of cracks and knot holes. Here David and his older brothers slept. In later years they used to laugh about shaking the snow from the bedclothes before turning out in the morning. Like so many of our Presidents and captains of industry, the young Cooks knew what it was to overcome the adverse forces of nature, and from these experiences David received a discipline which was worth much to him in after life.

David was a shy and silent child, yet gifted with vivid imagination. A pathetic little story which he told of himself after he was well along in years, illustrates this very distinctly. He had a little sister whom he loved devotedly. This affection, and the close relation thus brought about between the two children, is a

bright spot in a childhood otherwise rather gray and cheerless. The brother and sister played together happily, though playtimes were infrequent in the straitened, laborious life which the family was forced to lead during these years. He delighted to bring her the first spring flowers, the reddest and sweetest wild strawberries, the finest harvest apples and the plumpest hickory nuts. Her laughter was the sweetest music he knew; to please her he would do and dare anything that a boy might. But there came a day when Little Sister did not smile upon her playmate. Presently death claimed the beloved child and the boy faced his first great sorrow with a heartache which no one comprehended and which he could not reveal. The sorrows of children,—how often they involve real tragedies of the soul! On the day of the funeral it rained,—a quiet, steady downpour; but however depressing this may have been for the rest of the family, to the grieving boy it brought the benediction of Divine comfort. To him the falling raindrops said that God was sorry for

the little boy who had lost his sister, and was himself weeping out of sympathy.

It took the combined efforts of the Cook family to make a living from their little farm. David worked with the older boys, doing the things which his small strength permitted. He went barefoot from early spring until the snow flew and wore what was left of his brothers' clothes after they outgrew them. When he did come into possession of a new suit, it was of the cheapest kind. He was ten or eleven years old before he knew what an orange was, and a bit of candy was a treasure to be prized. During the winter months David went to the country school, though by far the greater and more valuable part of his education was received at home, where high standards of ethics and Christian culture were considered as important as the "three R's." A story of these winter school days will show how loyal the boy was to family traditions.

It was the noon hour. The frugal lunches had been eaten, and as the day was stormy many of the scholars remained in the schoolroom. David had ventured out, but finding

the storm worse than he thought hurried back to shelter, leaving the door open, boy-fashion. One of the "big girls" spoke with the authority of years and size.

"David, shut that door." And David, resenting the tone, probably, more than the command itself, replied with spirit,

"I won't do it."

Alas for David! His moment of boyish bravado was all too brief. The "big girl" bore down upon him in wrath, seized him by his slender shoulders, lifted him clear of the floor and swung him so that the impact of his feet closed the open door. Then she chanted triumphantly,

"You said you wouldn't shut the door—and you did! You've told a lie—a lie—a lie."

Amazed at the suddenness of the attack and its unexpected outcome, the little boy had no "comeback." *A lie?* Had he, David Cook, *told a lie?* His tormentor continued her humiliating chant until he could endure it no longer. Bolting out into the storm, he ran all the way home, to tell his mother the whole harrowing story, and receive from her the

comfort that only mothers can give to children in distress.

There was no Sunday-school in the neighborhood, but religious education was not neglected in the Cook home. It seems to have been thoroughly seasoned with the stern theology of the time, stressing the omniscience of God while only incidentally touching his infinite love and fatherhood. In telling the story of this period of his life Mr. Cook says, " I used to think of God and Jesus as living in heaven and watching all I did; punishing me for everything that was wrong; forgiving me if I was penitent enough, and giving me heaven at last if I was good enough and had been forgiven for all my badness." What a changed conception from that of the child, who thought a pitying God wept because a little boy was lonely and sad! It makes us wonder if, unconsciously, we have ever done such violence to a child's thought of God.

Time went on, and the growth of the slender, dark-eyed boy kept pace with the years. Never robust, he had a certain vitality which

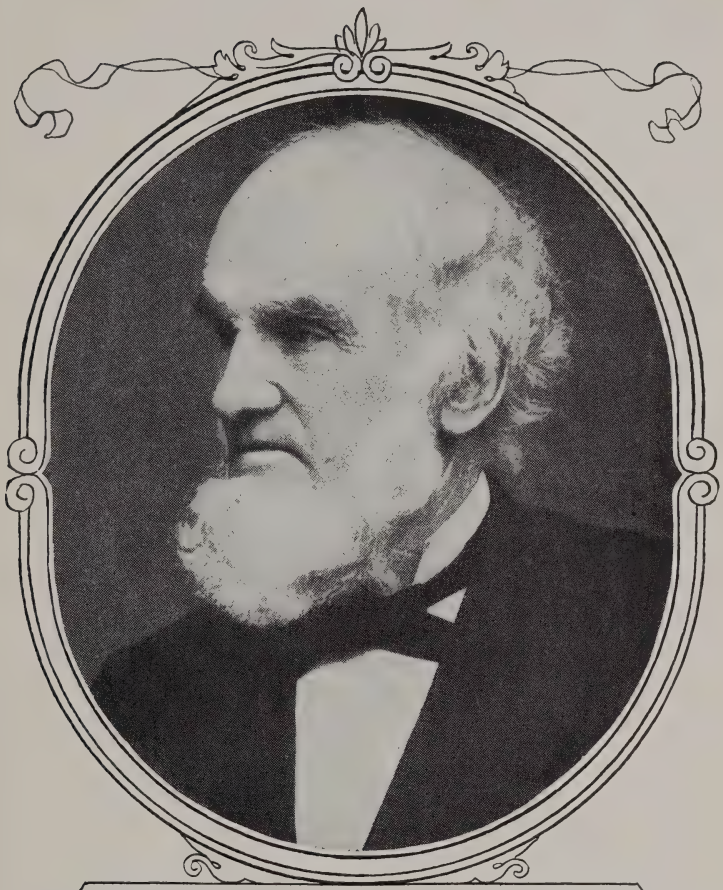
Corner View of Main Building, Wheaton College, Today.

sometimes seemed more a matter of the spirit than ordinary physical strength. The industry of the Cooks, father and sons, increased the value of the remote little farm. After a while it was profitably sold and the family moved nearer the village of Wheaton. Here David went to his first Sunday-school. Compared to those of our day, this was a cheerless place, yet it brought to the boy his first vision of what a life might be if given into the hands of the great Father of all. David was fortunate in being placed in the class of a woman who loved boys and believed in them. He never forgot the debt of gratitude he owed this understanding teacher. She taught him more than the names of the books of the Bible and the history of the children of Israel. She made the boy understand that God loved him, and inspired him to trust God with his future. He says in this connection, "I remember I used often to pray this prayer: '*O God, make all you can of my life.*'"

Naturally studious, David had little difficulty in mastering the rather limited curriculum of the public schools of the time. In 1860 a

small coeducational college had been established in Wheaton, and toward this David looked with longing eyes. His parents would have been glad to see him enrolled among the college students, but there was simply no money for the very modest tuition fees and necessary books. David undertook to earn the required amount in about the only way then open to a country boy who must put in full time on the regular work of the farm, and turned trapper, a veteran woodsman instructing him in the lore of baits, etc. To tend a trap line means to rise long before daybreak on frosty fall and winter mornings, dress as quickly as possible to shorten " the shivers," and start out in all sorts of weather to see what unwary creatures have been caught during the night. These must be put out of their misery and the traps reset; then follows the disagreeable task of skinning and stretching the pelt,—and this David hated with all his soul, but did with that careful attention to detail which was a characteristic of his later life.

The little hoard of silver and " greenbacks " grew slowly but steadily. At last the boy real-



Dr. Jonathan Blanchard, Sr.,

President of Wheaton College During Mr. Cook's Student Days.

ized his ambition and entered Wheaton College as a student, but his happiness was short-lived. One day as he was helping his father gather in the corn fodder a tiny sliver from a stalk pierced one of his eyes and lodged there. It was so small that the doctor failed to discover it and the irritation persisted for a considerable time before David was taken to Chicago for special examination. The splinter was removed, but the mischief was done; pterygium had set in,—a growth which produces blindness. The other eye became affected, and for weeks David was obliged to remain in a darkened room, enduring daily a very painful treatment with but little hope of recovery. He made a desperate effort to keep on with his studies. His mother read aloud to him, and, as he said, he "had plenty of time to think things out." As mental and spiritual discipline this was undoubtedly of great value, but by and by it was apparent that college work could not be done under such a tremendous handicap. He finally recovered his sight, though for some time his eyes were not strong.

This experience was probably one of the greatest disappointments of his life, but he bore it with characteristic fortitude. He never complained; never felt that the God he had trusted to make his life powerful for good had deserted him. One path had proved a blind alley; very well, he would try another. In the boy's attitude toward misfortune there was, even then, something of the grim determination with which he ever afterward faced life's crises, and carried on where lesser men would have gone down in defeat. Without being an extravagant optimist, as boy and man David C. Cook had that faith in God which characterized Browning's hero. He was

"One who never turned his back, but marched breast-forward;
Never doubted clouds would break;
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph;
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake."

Mrs. Jennie H. Caldwell,

One of Mr. Cook's Teachers at Wheaton College.

Chapter II

Launching Out

SOME time after David's disappointment in being unable to go on with his college work, the Cook family undertook another migration. The Wheaton property was disposed of and Mr. Cook took his wife and sons to " the city "; then as now, Chicago needed no other designation among the residents of Northern Illinois. Even then it was calling men of ambition and initiative to cast in their lot with a municipality which had so much to offer in the way of conveniences and opportunities. Were not its streets lighted at night—most of them? And were there not street cars to carry people to and from work as luxuriously as though every man owned his own horse and wagon? Chicago was already an important manufacturing center, besides being the terminal of many railway lines and navigation routes of the Great Lakes. Fortunes were being made in lumber, in manufactures and merchandise; in fact, the rush to Chicago in the late

60's had much about it to remind the "old-timer" of the gold rush to the Pacific Coast in 1849.

Possibly with more thought of the future of his sons than of his own advantage, Ezra Cook opened a small printing office in a building on La Salle Street, between Washington and Randolph and just opposite the present site of the Court House, specializing in bank supplies. In this place young David learned to set type and mastered the other intricacies of the trade by serving as "printer's devil." Those were the days when type was set and distributed by hand, and here, perhaps, the youth developed the meticulous attention to detail which was such a marked characteristic of the man, and so large a factor in his success.

Next door to the Cook printing office was the shop of a man who sold sewing machines, a labor-saving invention dating back to the time of Elias Howe, but only then coming into general use. This man proposed to young David that he work for him as salesman. Here he became thoroughly familiar

with the construction of the machines and "waiting on trade" in the shop. This connection lasted about a year; then he was ready to go into business for himself.

Business, however, was always a secondary interest with David C. Cook. Then, as in later years, the master passion of his life was the Sunday-school. Reared in a Christian home, he was always interested in religion, and at the age of fourteen united with the church. Of Methodist ancestry and upbringing, he naturally entered that denomination, though to him the worship of God and the work to be done for the advancement of his Kingdom were matters too big to be confined within denominational fences.

At the age of seventeen he became a teacher in the Ward's Rolling Mills Sunday School, and here, he always felt, his real life work began. He did not have to be coaxed or driven; so great was his interest in the boys and girls whom he met Sunday after Sunday, that presently he offered his services as teacher to the Milwaukee Avenue Mission and the Wicker Park Sunday School. This he could do, be-

cause the hours of meeting were different. He found the work fascinating, and never tired in his ministry of teaching. For the greater part of the next four years he taught two or three classes each Sunday. Most of his evenings were spent in visiting his scholars in their homes; he always held that a successful Sunday-school teacher had to be "on the job" seven days of the week. Saturday afternoons he gave to the quest for new scholars, stopping children whom he met on the street for a friendly chat which included the inquiry, "Where do you go to Sunday-school?" If the answer was "Nowhere," he would say, "Well, I've just been looking for you. We want you in a class at ——— (naming the place). Where do you live? Let's go to see your folks about it." Then home he would go with his "prospect," and nine times out of ten the child would be in class the next Sunday.

In addition to this teaching on Sunday, young David made a practice of gathering the boys and girls from the streets in the neighborhood of his home into his father's front

yard, or that of some obliging friend, and singing with them the Sunday-school songs. He had a fine tenor voice, and could sing the old-time favorites with a will; more than that, he had the knack of getting other people to sing. Passers-by used to look curiously at the slender, dark-haired youth who was throwing himself so whole-heartedly into the singing. In tones like a silver trumpet he would urge his chorus to "Hold the Fort" and "Throw out the Lifeline," and make the work of rescuing the perishing seem an adventure to challenge the heroism of the bravest. The good accomplished by these open-air services was by no means confined to the youngsters assembled in the front yard. Little by little it dawned on the street urchins of the West Side that going to Sunday-school might not be the dull and dreary thing they had imagined,—at least, it wouldn't be so in "Mr. Cook's Sunday School." They responded to his friendliness as naturally and inevitably as plants turn toward the sunshine, and the average attendance at the different

schools with which he was connected showed a steady increase.

In the meantime his business venture was prospering. These were the days when sewing-machine manufacturers did not furnish a box of bright, nickel-plated "accessories" with each machine. Hemmers, tuckers, rufflers and other parts had to be bought separately, and the manufacturers kept the price high. There was also more or less trouble over the delivery of orders. Young David conceived the idea of buying from the factory and selling direct to the customer. This he did with considerable success for awhile, but traveling was not so easy and comfortable as now, and his health broke under the strain of contending with the irregularities of railway train schedules, jolting over rough roads in stages and eating the weird combinations of food served at small-town hotels. Nothing daunted, he set himself to think through the new difficulty. The result of his thinking was the establishment of a mail-order business in sewing-machine accessories.

His father gave him desk space in his print-

ing office and the young business man began the correspondence necessary to get hemmers, tuckers, etc., from the factory to customer. He found that independent manufacturers furnished them much cheaper than the "regulars," and that Germany made better needles than were to be found in this country, and sold them for less money. It was clear that "the firm" could procure accessories and sell them at a price considerably lower than the regular companies. Lists of names were laboriously collected and classified and a flourishing trade built up. By and by more room was needed, and Mr. Cook rented the front room in a house on Kinzie Street, and began looking around for a helper.

Mindful of his school days at Wheaton and what he had learned of the student personnel, Mr. Cook wrote the college authorities asking them to recommend "an ambitious boy" to assist him. The name sent him was that of George P. Bent—known today as the millionaire piano manufacturer—and thus began the business association of a few years and the friendship of a lifetime. Bent was hired as

errand boy and general assistant. He swept the one room of the "store," dusted the proprietor's desk and chair, helped unpack goods and fill orders. He was alert, interested and proud of his job. The mail-order business grew prodigiously and its future seemed assured.

The autumn of 1871 was hot and dry, but the weather did not particularly affect the little store on Kinzie Street. When October opened a thousand dollars' worth of machine needles arrived from Germany and were put in the safe, which held the books, accounts, lists of customers, actual and prospective, and other valuable papers. Then the Widow O'Leary went out to milk her cow by the light of a kerosene lamp and the historic Chicago fire began. It raged for three days and nights. When it had burned itself out 100,000 people were homeless and the greater part of Chicago's business district was a mass of smoking ruins. In an hour the flames swept away all David C. Cook's business possessions, burying the safe and its precious contents under tons of débris from the wrecked buildings

Devastation in the Wake of the Chicago Fire of 1871.

on either side. It was a heart-breaking time, but the Cooks, who were then living on Bann Street, in a West Side division called Wicker Park, felt themselves very fortunate in that their home was not destroyed. With his business blotted out, Mr. Cook's available capital consisted of five dollars which he happened to have in his pocket when the fire started. This was quickly spent in buying milk for frightened, hungry babies, but he kept on with his work of helping the homeless and destitute to find food and shelter, working by sheer nerve force and will power when men of greater physical strength gave up in despair.

It was a time of great discouragement. There seemed to be no future for the stricken city. Business was gone, buildings ruined, banks suspended; what was there left to build on? Railroads were offering free transportation to more fortunate locations south and east, and Chicago people were leaving by trainloads to begin again somewhere else. Like the others, Mr. Cook had lost his all. It looked as though Chicago would never re-

cover from the blow. He was inclined to "follow the crowd," but would not allow himself to do so without taking time to think through the problems involved. While he was doing this the tide turned.

From every direction, hands of helpfulness were extended to the city which was fighting for its life. Eastern capitalists offered building loans, wholesale houses extended credit, unsolicited orders came in. "Help Chicago" became a nation-wide slogan, and stirred the heart of the people, north, south, east and west. Never were a young man's prayers for guidance more promptly and definitely answered, and David C. Cook decided to "stick by the ship." Never, so far as is known, did he regret this decision.

Having no immediate use for an assistant, Mr. Cook released Bent, who went back to Wheaton and began teaching in the commercial department of the college. Mr. Cook's father and brother had secured an old building on Clinton Street and resumed their printing of bank supplies. Here David started again; this time without even a desk to hold his let-

Another Area Laid Waste by the Chicago Fire.

ters and papers. There was no office furniture to be bought, and had there been he had no money to buy. But there was an old dry-goods box in the basement and he managed to secure a handful of nails. Presently he had a desk which he admitted was " not much to look at," but which would protect his belongings, and was ready for business. Misfortune seemed tired of beating a man who didn't know when he was whipped. In six months he had more than made up all his losses.

During these strenuous days he never slackened his Sunday-school work. A group of Moody Sunday School people who had been " burned out " were living with his people, and through them he became interested in that organization and its great leader. Seeing a promising field for service he took a class there in addition to the one he was teaching on the West Side. The Moody School session was at nine o'clock in the morning, the other at three in the afternoon. When he saw how much there was to be done in the fire-swept area he decided that he could also do some-

thing with his evenings. With three other young men he rented a room on the North Side. They boarded with their landlady, but she was a poor cook and a worse housekeeper and this arrangement did not last long. They next rented a basement and did their own cooking. In this way they secured a large front room for the use of their mission boys and girls. So interesting did Mr. Cook find this work that he gave it practically all the time not required by his business and devoted to it all his income over and above the very modest sum which he considered sufficient for his personal needs. While other young men were resting and playing, he and his associates were visiting the homes of the destitute, doing relief and missionary work. Mr. Cook conducted neighborhood and cottage prayer meetings and provided for the sick and distressed. Wherever help was needed, there he was to be found. He rented an upstairs room Sundays for his mission school; during the week it was a dance hall. It was in a very rough district, and on three different occasions he was waylaid and knocked down

by street ruffians who took exception to the temperance instruction which the children were receiving from him during the Sunday-school hour and through the week at the social meetings in the basement room. Though he knew well the difficulty and danger of the warfare in which he had engaged, this gallant young soldier of righteousness never flinched or faltered. In the winter of 1872 he organized and superintended Everybody's Mission, which was first opened on North Avenue, in what was then one of the worst neighborhoods of the city. For use in Sunday-school work he bought a little organ. His friends would help him carry it to the mission Sundays and bring it back to their basement for use during the week.

"*O God, make all you can of my life,*" had been the prayer of the boy. Under the guidance of the Master Builder, the man was answering that prayer.

Chapter III

Choosing a Life Work

EMINENTLY practical in all matters of business, Mr. Cook knew that in the battle against ignorance and wickedness "the sinews of war" are as needful as in any other campaign; missions need money as well as faith and consecration, and he kept on down town, extending the mail-order business so that there might be no financial shortage on North Avenue. He recalled young Bent from Wheaton, and the two worked together harmoniously for several years. Out of business hours Mr. Cook continued his Sunday-school teaching and mission work. Everybody's Mission grew and prospered. In the course of time it seemed advisable to get away from the rather undesirable environment. A lot was leased on a street near by and a building erected, chiefly at Mr. Cook's expense. There was a large attendance every Sunday,—between three and four hundred "regulars," though the enrollment was much larger.

Without aid from any church or society, Mr. Cook maintained and financed this school until churches were organized in the neighborhood and able to take over the work. Besides Everybody's Mission, he organized and superintended the North Avenue Mission, the Lake View Mission and the Lake View Union Sunday School. Much of the time for ten years he superintended two schools, and some of the time three schools, each Sunday.

Superintendents and teachers in modern Sunday-schools can have little understanding of the difficulties Mr. Cook had to meet and master in carrying on his work for the underprivileged people of Chicago during the reconstruction period immediately following the great fire. All were poor, many were illiterate, some were embittered by their losses. Saloons and gambling dens preyed upon their scanty resources, leaving them robbed of money and wounded in self-respect. Naturally, these destructive agencies feared and hated the work which the missions were doing, and, as has been said, they now

and then wreaked their vengeance on the man responsible for it.

There were also perplexing problems connected with the instruction given the boys and girls in the mission schools. Sunday-school supplies were limited; lesson helps, as we know them, were almost unknown. Bible lessons were studied from the Book itself. There were no explanatory notes to throw light on hard passages. Hymn books were scarce and expensive. Before there could be singing worthy the name, the boys and girls must be taught both tune and words. In the great majority of cases home study was absolutely out of the question, and in the days which intervened between Sunday and Sunday there were a thousand adverse interests at work to scatter or spoil the " good seed " of Christian teaching sown at the mission Sunday-school.

At that time, Adams, Blackmer & Lyon was the largest Chicago firm handling Sunday-school material. Edward Eggleston, author of " The Hoosier Schoolmaster," was associated with this firm, and to him Mr. Cook

often went to "talk things over." The Chicago company had a little pamphlet of suggestions to teachers, and Eggleston knew of one published in the East, but the latter was very expensive and Mr. Cook did not feel that he could afford to purchase the quantity needed for his Sunday-schools. The need increased with every new scholar enrolled, and at last Mr. Cook determined to get out some kind of lesson helps himself. He consulted with other Chicago Sunday-school superintendents whom he knew and succeeded in interesting them in the project; one or two agreed to use such a publication if he would get it out. It was Mr. Cook's idea to print a pamphlet containing the lesson text and explanatory notes, also a few hymns, and thus save on the cost of songbooks. This he proceeded to do in his characteristic painstaking way.

From the secretary of the newly organized International Association of Sunday School Superintendents he secured a list of names of those who might naturally be supposed to favor his undertaking. This proved a great help in getting started. He sent letters to as

many Sunday-schools as he could reach by means of this list, and then bent all his energies to getting out his first venture in the untried field of Sunday-school publications. He wrote and edited much of the material, set most of the type and printed it on his own press. He called the pamphlet "Our Sunday School Quarterly," and as he wrote notes and supplemental material his one thought was of the help it would afford the boys and girls of his mission schools.

The success of the quarterly was immediate, and in a measure which surprised even the optimistic young editor and publisher. The first number had a circulation of 40,000 copies and the second almost doubled that figure. He called in George Bent, and told him the glad tidings, adding, "I tell you, *I've got something.*"

Bent gave him little encouragement. In fact he remonstrated, and frankly told his friend that he was "going crazy over the Sunday-school business." By this time the sewing-machine accessories occupied two floors in a building on Madison, between State and

Wabash; it was a "going concern," and Bent disliked to see its future imperiled by any wild schemes connected with Sunday-school supplies. But David C. Cook had gripped a big idea—or it had gripped him—and no amount of persuasion could compel him to abandon it. He looked out the window a moment, and seemed to see a long way into the future.

"See here," he said, swinging around in his office chair and facing his critic squarely, "How would you like to take over the machine business and leave me free to go on with my Sunday-school quarterlies? I'm more interested in that line of work, anyway."

"All right," said Bent promptly, feeling very much as though his superior had offered him a gold mine, and fearing only that he would repent his generosity before the deal was closed. Bent bought the business, and from that time on Mr. Cook gave himself heart and soul to the work of supplying the Sunday-school world with lesson helps and other literature.

Mrs. Cook gave her husband great assistance in preparing the first issues of "Our

Mr. and Mrs. Cook at the Time of Their Marriage.

Sunday School Quarterly," and also helped launch their first Sunday-school paper. This was called " Our Sunday-school Gem," a well-chosen name, for even today it would be considered a high-class publication in every way. It was a bright, sparkling little sixteen-page magazine, as different as possible from the dry-as-dust Sunday-school papers of the day. " Our Sunday-school Gem," published in April, 1875, achieved almost instantaneous success, and richly deserved it.

While Mr. Cook's first thought in issuing these initial publications was to provide the children of his mission schools with convenient and attractive lesson material, he soon saw that an extensive circulation would cut down costs and enable him to furnish his quarterlies, etc., at a minimum price, a policy, by the way, which he followed ever after. He published lesson helps to *serve the Sunday-school,*—not " for revenue only."

Mr. and Mrs. Cook were making their home in Lake View, Ill., and there the David C. Cook Publishing Company was first established. If, in the early days, the family ever missed

the comfortable income which the sewing-machine accessories had afforded, it was regarded merely as incidental,—"the fortunes of war," so to speak. Mr. Cook was never one to look back after he had "set his hand to the plough," and Mrs. Cook came of pioneer stock which had demonstrated its ability to "keep on keeping on," in the face of difficulties and privations.

Those were busy days in Lake View, but happy ones. In the Publishing House the President and General Manager was doing the work of three men, transacting an enormous amount of business, superintending the various departments—for he knew every detail of the printing industry from A to Z—carrying on a wide and varied correspondence, preparing lesson material for the quarterlies and selecting stories, etc., for the Sunday-school papers. Possibly at this time he formed the habit of keeping under his pillow a tablet of paper and a pencil, to jot down any stray thought which might be of value to his work, but which, had he waited until morning to commit it to writing, would have been lost.

From a Recent Photograph.

This plan he found most helpful, as he said his best thoughts came to him in the night, when things were quiet.

In the home, the young wife and mother —who was also Secretary of the Company— looked well to the ways of her household, and in her spare time (?) wrote, revised manuscript and otherwise relieved her husband of much tiresome and time-consuming detail work. When the publication of Primary department quarterlies and other literature was decided upon, she took entire charge of the undertaking. Under her efficient management it soon became, and continues to be, a strong and inspiring factor in the religious education of little children. This is foundational work, whose importance it is impossible to estimate.

It should be noted here that Mrs. Cook is still Secretary of the David C. Cook Publishing Company and continues the work of editing its Beginners, Primary and Junior publications. Though she does not, as in former years, write all the material that goes into them, every page has her personal super-

vision. The lessons, as prepared, have the background of her rich and varied experience to give them life and color, and the extraordinarily large circulation of Mrs. Cook's quarterlies proves the excellence of her judgment in determining the needs of elementary Sunday-school scholars and teachers.

The location of the first plant was on Lincoln Avenue near Wrightwood, in a three-story frame building. The two lower floors were given over to the regular work of a publishing house, but the third floor Mr. Cook reserved for religious services on Sundays. Here he superintended a large Sunday-school, observing closely the way classes of different ages reacted to the helps furnished them, and thus obtaining valuable suggestions for the improvement of his publications. By degrees the list was lengthened. The Builder Series was put out for intermediate grades, and "Dew Drops" for very little people. There were also publications for Bible classes, both teacher and scholar. An immense amount of work was involved, for the linotype machines were not yet invented. Type was set by hand

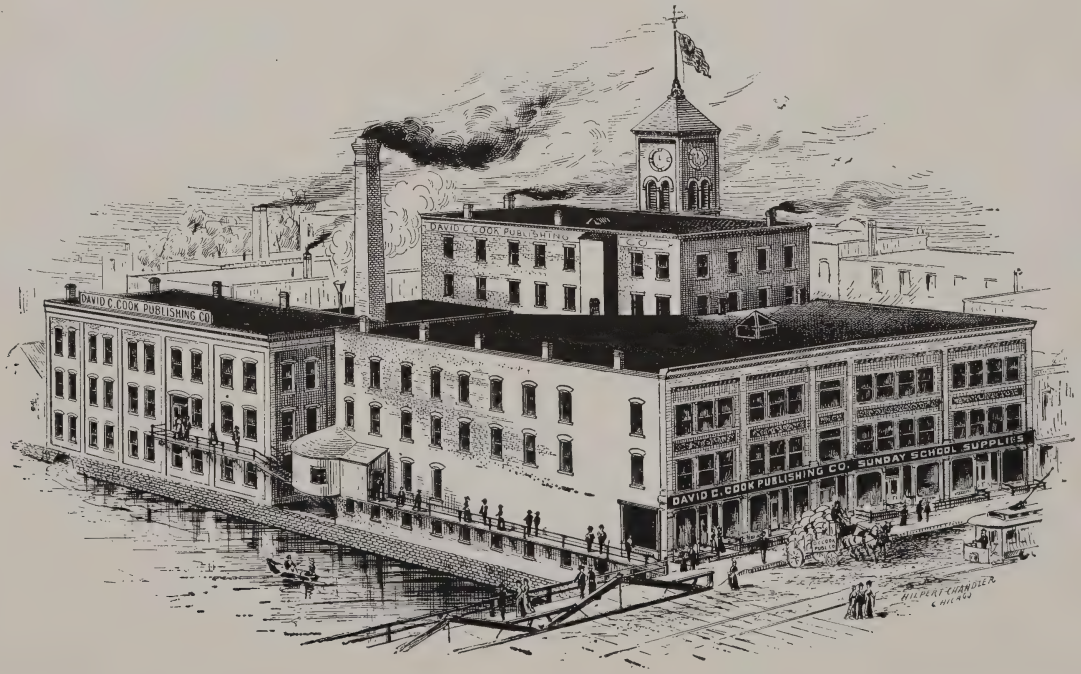
and distributed after the plates were made in the company's small foundry.

Press after press was added to print the steadily increasing output of the David C. Cook Publishing Company, but no urgency of business was ever allowed to interfere with the President's personal contact with Sunday-schools and Sunday-school interests. He organized and superintended a small school in the neighborhood of Mohawk and Willow Streets; he championed the temperance cause in person and through his publications; he lectured, presided at temperance meetings and did hand-to-hand work with those who, because of intemperance, were down and out. He kept up his habit of visiting the homes of his Sunday-school scholars. On Wednesday nights he conducted a service of prayer and song in the big, third-floor room of the Publishing House. In this work he was assisted by T. Martin Towne, an accomplished musician who had charge of the company's work for better Sunday-school singing. Throughout Chicago's North Side the name of David C. Cook was known as that of a man tireless

in good works, one whose example of zeal, courage, and persistent industry was quoted far and wide.

By the early 80's the business had outgrown its quarters in the three-story building on Lincoln Avenue, and Mr. Cook began looking around for another location. It was finally decided to remove to Elgin, where an old woolen mill on the banks of the Fox River was for sale at a reasonable price. (This building is still standing, and is occupied at present by the Y. M. C. A.) In 1882 fourteen big cylinder presses were crated and moved into their new quarters, besides a vast quantity of other equipment, and ever since, Elgin has been the fountain-head from which the stream of the David C. Cook Sunday-school literature has flowed to every quarter of the globe.

In this connection it should be noted that with Mr. Cook came a corps of faithful co-workers, men and women who because of intimate association with their chief had come to believe in him, heart and soul, and were willing to cast in their lot with him, wherever he might choose to live and whatever he might


DAVID C. COOK PUBLISHING CO.
DAVID C. COOK PUBLISHING CO.
DAVID C. COOK PUBLISHING CO. SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPPLIES
HILPERT-CHANDLER
CHICAGO

The First Home of the Publishing House, Elgin.

decide to do. They did not always understand and appreciate Mr. Cook's mission, but *they believed in the man,* and well did he justify their faith in him. Some of this loyal band have gone to their reward, but some remain. The veteran foreman of the Press Room of today is the Swedish lad who was "printer's devil" in the old days at Lake View; the hale and erect old superintendent of the Stock Room is the young Englishman who at this time made up his mind that he would "go with the boss" to Elgin.

In 1901 the second home of the David C. Cook Publishing Company was found to be too small, and larger and more commodious quarters were built in the North End, on what is now North Grove Avenue. Since that time practically every department has been doubled in size and efficiency, so that the plant occupies the entire block between Lincoln and Slade Avenues. On the second floor of the central building, in a sunny room equipped with the plainest of furniture, David C. Cook took his place as Editor-in-chief of the publications which by this time had in-

creased twentyfold. He was the hardest working man in the organization. He came early and stayed late. His path was not always smooth. At one time it looked as though the work of a lifetime was about to collapse in utter ruin, but he stood with his back to the wall and fought failure to a triumphant finish. And when the panic was over the "Old Guard" who had come with him to Elgin gripped one another by the hand and reaffirmed their creed, "*The Old Man can't be beat.*"

In the quiet office on the second floor, a grave, steady-eyed man looked out of the eastern windows. He reviewed the past and looked into the future. Like Joshua of old, he saw that there remained much land to possess for the Sunday-school, and in his heart there rose again the prayer of his childhood, "O God, *make all you can of my life.*" It may have been expressed in other words, but it was unchanged in earnestness and desire.

In all his efforts to help the Sunday-school, Mr. Cook was most fortunate in having the loyal support of his family. From the very

beginning of his work as a publisher, his wife gave him splendid assistance. Later the two sons, George and David, Jr., earnestly and lovingly did all in their power to carry out his plans. Indeed, " house policy " at the present time is based upon this foundation, and family devotion is supplemented by the hearty coöperation of all associated with the David C. Cook Publishing Company.

George E. Cook

David C. Cook, Jr.

Chapter IV

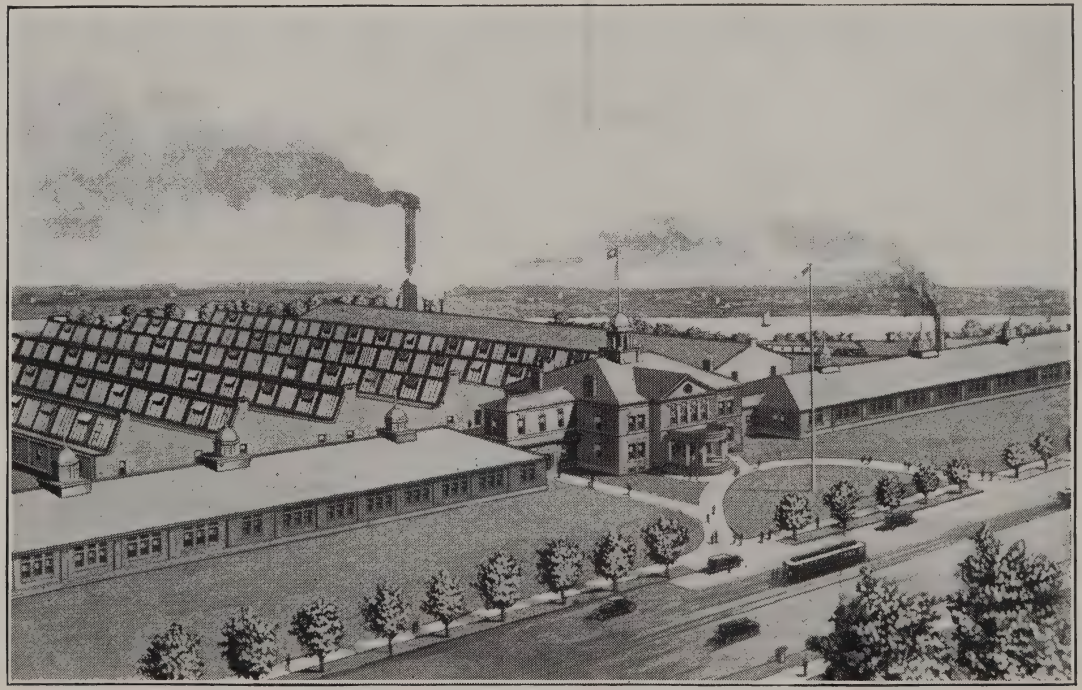
The Foundation of a Fortune

IN the early history of Israel the Lord God revealed an unalterable principle of the divine economy,—"Them that honour me I will honour." *1 Sam. 2: 30.* Of this affirmation Robertson Nicoll says, "It is one of the grandest sayings in Scripture. It is the eternal rule of the kingdom of God, not limited to the days of Hophni and Phinehas, but like the laws of the Medes and Persians, eternal as the ordinances of heaven. It is a law confirmed by all history; every man's life confirms it, for though this life is but the beginning of our career, and the final clearing up of divine providence is to be left to the judgment day, yet when we look back on the world's history we find that those who have honored God have been honored by him." What has been true of so many men in the past holds good in our own day, and is strikingly demonstrated in the life and work of David C. Cook. As a boy he honored God by the voluntary gift of his life, and God honored

him by making that life count powerfully for good, by giving him a place with the foremost religious educators of the world and by making him the steward of a generous amount of this world's goods.

As has been previously stated, Mr. Cook's idea in publishing Sunday-school lesson helps was to provide the boys and girls of his mission schools with suitable material for lesson study. He hoped, too, to make it possible for other mission schools to procure for a small sum the helps they could not otherwise afford; a large output would lessen the proportionate cost of typesetting and plate making. After the removal of the publishing plant to Elgin and its installation in the three-story brick building beside the river, the business grew by leaps and bounds. The circulation of some of the publications ran into the hundred-thousands. Sometimes the presses worked all night long, and the volume of business handled in the Main Office and Correspondence Room was enormous.

While the founder of this great business never regarded it as a money-making enter-



The Present Home of the David C. Cook Publishing Company.

prise, it did, by the blessing of God added to his own tireless industry and remarkable foresight, make money for him. It is time we recognized financial ability as a gift from God, bestowed for a beneficent purpose and for which a strict account will be required. God changes not; as truly now as in the days of Moses he is the one who gives power to get wealth. *Deut. 8: 18.* There are different gifts, as Paul tells us, but he does not list them all in his letter to the Corinthians. We are coming to realize that the man with practical business sense is as truly "gifted" as the poet, the musician or the sculptor; this faculty Mr. Cook possessed in a marked degree.

His was a most fertile and ingenious mind. Back in the sewing-machine days he had used it in perfecting some of the accessories; now he employed it in improving his Sunday-school supplies and in devising ways and means by which Sunday-school teaching could be made more effective. His work as Sunday-school superintendent, first in Grace Methodist Episcopal Church, and later in First Church, enabled him to keep his finger

on the Sunday-school pulse of the world, so to speak. If it was weak, he promptly set to work to find a stimulant which should also be "a builder," and almost invariably he succeeded. New publications were issued, new departments opened, new plans tried out before being recommended to the public. He became a national and international figure, prominent in all gatherings of Sunday-school workers, speaking "as one having authority" and being listened to with the greatest respect. He was the personal friend of D. L. Moody and Marion Lawrance, and the entire group of splendid men who in the latter part of the last century did such valiant service for the Kingdom in the field of Sunday-school endeavor.

There are blades so keen that they wear out the scabbard which contains them, and so there came a time when his super-normally active mind began to draw too heavily upon Mr. Cook's physical strength. The constant strain of office and editorial work, upon which the burden of public service was little by little imposed, became more than he could stand. He faced the prospect of a complete

Home on Piru Ranch nearly Forty Years Ago.

nervous breakdown as courageously and philosophically as he had faced the days in the darkened room back in Wheaton, and the loss of all his worldly possessions in the Chicago fire. With the same determination that he had fought financial ruin, he set himself to restore his impaired health. Realizing the worth of Nature's sovereign remedy, sunshine, he resolved to go where it was available in largest measure. Leaving the Publishing House in the hands of competent lieutenants, Mr. Cook went with his family to California.

It was not wholly an unknown land to him, as he had made occasional winter visits to the Golden Gate State in former years. He knew where he wished to locate, and after some investigation decided to buy the ranch made famous by Helen Hunt Jackson in "Ramona." (The Temescal Land Grant, which Mr. Cook purchased, was a part of the Camulos Ranch.) It was a large tract of land lying in the Piru Cañon, very fertile but only partly under cultivation. In the mountains near by gold had first been discovered in paying quantities in 1838. The uncultivated land was a

wilderness of sagebrush, cactus, and wild mustard, the home of foxes, coyotes, rabbits, and other wild life of the desert. Its development seemed an all but hopeless task, but after securing the necessary water rights, Mr. Cook undertook it as affording the best way to regain his health.

Deciding that the fruit industry was one which would flourish in that soil and climate, he began extensive operations in reclaiming desert land and making it blossom with citrous groves and fig orchards. He divided the acreage into five parts,—Piru, the lower ranch, Middle Ranch, Temescal, Calora, and Esperanza. A foreman was employed for each division, having charge of a large force of workmen, white, Mexican, and Chinese, but Mr. Cook was here, there, personally inspecting a thousand and one details. A great amount of construction work was undertaken,—the building of homes for the foremen and quarters for the working force, implement sheds, packing houses, etc., etc. He improved and opened twelve miles of irrigating ditches. He had the town site of Piru laid

out, a spur track built to it, put up a depot and a house for the agent, whose salary he paid from his own pocket. He built a church, so that his employees might not be without religious privileges. There were perhaps a hundred families living in the ranch area, and he gathered their children into a Sunday-school which he superintended and supplied with all necessary lesson helps and story papers. He built a home for his family on a terrace overlooking the great orchard project. Back of it rose the rugged mountains. On either side it was flanked by the semi-tropical growth of the region, the stiff foliage of palms and yuccas beautifully mingled with the feathery leaves and brilliant berries of the pepper tree, and flowers, flowers everywhere. The " garden " was ten acres in extent!

A writer in the " Overland Magazine " who visited Piru Fruit Rancho at this time describes Mr. Cook as " a slight, nervous-looking man with smooth-shaven hollow cheeks, animated eyes, and the whitest teeth I ever saw. He proved himself an agreeable host, notwithstanding his possession of a full share

of the eccentricities usually ascribed to genius. His almost superhuman energy, combined with rare executive ability and an extraordinary insight into the broadest and subtlest mechanics, renders him able to bring to a successful issue undertakings that would paralyze the forces of an ordinary individual. One views with wonder the man who has accomplished so much in so short a time."

Where the cañon of the Piru widened into valleys and plateaus, Mr. Cook planted orchards and vineyards. Visitors were shown four hundred acres of young oranges, three hundred of apricots, one hundred and eighty of figs, two hundred of English walnuts, one hundred and thirty of olives, eighty of grapes, thirty of chestnuts, twenty of almonds and ten each of pomegranates and Japanese persimmons, all growing vigorously. The orchards were irrigated from a flume over four miles long, which tapped the head waters of the river. Entire mountains were set out to eucalyptus forests, and one lovely rounded hill was planted to olives. This the owner in all reverence named Olivet.

A Former Home in Los Angeles.

As the orchards came into bearing Mr. Cook met and mastered the transportation problems with which the California fruit grower has to contend. Here his initiative and resourcefulness were again shown. The apricot market was poor; he installed a dryer and took care of his crop in that way. He built a plant for curing raisins, and had the Piru figs dried and packed in small boxes. He never allowed his fruit to spoil on his hands; for one or two years the Rancho even made fig jam.

Mr. Cook's methods of handling the small army of men in his employ were unique, and his Mexican laborers sometimes rebelled at some of the restrictions imposed upon them. He would not countenance drinking, profanity or the use of tobacco, but the greater number of his workmen were like the old sea-captain who, when the edict against tobacco was issued, laid his pipe on the shelf with a long regretful sigh and the significant remark, "Well, if the Boss says it goes, it goes. And he's more'n likely to be right." Mr. Cook made sure that his men were well housed and well fed; he was always making the rounds of

the bunk houses and tents where the workmen were quartered, and woe to the foreman in whose department were found untidy quarters and unclean beds. He made it a point to drop into the cookhouses at unexpected times, so that he might be sure of the quality of the food served at meals. He opened cupboards, inspected bread boxes, peered into ovens, sampled the big jars of beans, tasted the meats and vegetables and always ate a doughnut or a piece of cake. At first the cooks resented what they considered "noseyness," but after awhile they rather enjoyed the visits of the man who would not stand for slackness of any sort, but who knew efficiency when he saw it and was as ready to praise good work as he was to "jump all over" the other sort.

Vineyards grew, eucalyptus and olive groves flourished and the orchards of citrous fruit, almonds and English walnuts brought forth plentifully, but everyone knew that the great ranch was merely a means to an end; the heart of the owner was in the brick building beside the river, where compositors were

busy setting type for Sunday-school quarterlies and story papers, and the great presses roared over their daily rations of paper and ink. When visitors remarked at the extent of Mr. Cook's undertakings, Mrs. Cook would invariably answer, " Oh, this is Mr. Cook's play; his *work* is back East." Every now and then he would make a flying trip to Elgin, and his brief visits were memorable in more ways than one. Not only was every department closely inspected with a view of keeping it in the highest state of efficiency, but old friendships were renewed, and personal relations established with new employees. The present manager of the Correspondence Room tells of one such visit when she as a young girl had just entered upon the work of that department.

Word was passed around that at the close of working hours the girls were to meet in one end of the long room. On gathering there they found Mr. Cook standing beside a big box of fruit which he had brought from the California ranch. There was an orange for each one, but this was not the real reason for

his calling the young people together; it was to familiarize them with certain details of Bible history that he felt might be a little hazy in their minds. Taking up an enormous cluster of Tokay grapes, then not so common in the middle west as now, he said, "Now, it might have been some such fruit as this" (note that he did not say "was") "that the spies Moses sent into the land of Canaan brought back to him, carried by two men on a staff, or pole. Who knows what that was?"

This was easy, and there was a prompt chorus of "Grapes."

Mr. Cook smiled and took up another fruit, this time less familiar.

"Here's a specimen of something else they brought," said he, holding it up. "Who'll tell me what this is?"

No one was ready with an answer, and he went further into detail.

"It was part of the design embroidered upon the robes of Aaron, the high priest. Blue and purple and scarlet they were, just above the hem, with golden bells between."

By this time the dark-haired girl with the

oval face had guessed the riddle and answered with sparkling eyes,

"Pomegranates!"

"Right," said Mr. Cook, and handed her the fruit.

Next came a ripe fig, and nobody guessed it; perhaps not many could do so today. Then the demonstrator of Bible-and-California fruit took up a branch thickly set with grayish-green leaves and purplish drupes that looked a little like small plums.

"There is a little mountain near Jerusalem where there used to be trees which bore fruit like this," said he. "Who can tell me the name of it?"

"Olives," answered the dark-haired girl promptly, and a ripple of laughter ran over the audience. Not too well pleased, Mr. Cook said rather sternly,

"Why do you laugh?" There was a moment's hush and then some brave spirit answered,

"Well, she ought to know that; *her name's Olive.*"

All sternness vanished and Mr. Cook's face broke into its characteristic, vivid smile.

"Is that so?" he exclaimed in pleased surprise. "Then surely she ought to have the other olives," and handed the branch to her.

The busy years went on until the desert of sagebrush and cactus had been wonderfully transformed; it was a veritable paradise of flowers, fruits and fertile fields. Best of all, the end for which the work had been undertaken was accomplished. Taut nerves had relaxed under the beneficent touch of sunshine and mountain breeze. Flabby muscles had grown strong. Under a coat of tan that made him look like an Indian, Mr. Cook's face showed a ruddy, wholesome color. He had won his fight and was again a well man. Then the Silent Partner of all his business enterprises, the One who gave him the brain to conceive and the power to perform, arranged the next move of this eventful career. Oil was discovered on Piru Ranch.

If money making had been Mr. Cook's goal he would never have left California. He had made the ranch not only a thing of beauty

but a paying proposition, and he had the business acumen to see the significance of this new "break" in his favor. Yet he accepted the first fair proposition made him for the purchase of his holdings, sold out to a Los Angeles syndicate, left the beautiful home on the mountain side with its enchanting view over the valley made beautiful and fruitful by his efforts, and came back to his little office in the old woolen mill to resume active participation in the routine work of the Publishing Company. Some of the money received from the syndicate went into the new plant which, in course of time, he erected on North Grove Avenue. Some of it was judiciously invested in Chicago real estate, which as the city grew became very valuable. Back in the 70's Mr. Cook devoted to the work of his mission schools all his income over and above the modest sum necessary for his personal needs. So, in the later years, he used to divert the income from his Chicago holdings to meet the exigencies which sometimes arose in the publishing business and to further work which he had undertaken to advance Sunday-school

interests. He was one of the few great men who could say with entire truthfulness,

> "Naught that I have my own I call;
> I hold it for the Giver."

The Present Family Home on Gifford Street, Elgin.

Chapter V

Widening the Circle

GREAT as was Mr. Cook's work in reclaiming a desert area and making of it a tract of marvelous beauty and fruitfulness, this period of his life had a spiritual outgrowth which was in every way as wonderful. This was the organization and development of the I. A. H. (I Am His) Circle, which, from a small beginning in the church in Los Angeles that Mr. Cook attended when in the city, extended far beyond the borders of this country and this continent. Indeed, wherever the English language is spoken, there the " I. A. H. Letters " have gone and the little silver ring, the symbol of the Circle and the Charmed Life, is worn.

It seems there had been in Los Angeles a series of what are called " revival meetings." Mr. Cook attended some of them, and so did many of the young people in whom he had become interested. Apparently the revivalist

was in sympathy with Browning in his reflection,

> "Sometimes I think how very hard it is
> To be a Christian,"

for in talking with the boys and girls after the meetings were over Mr. Cook says: "They told me it was of no use to try to be Christians, and they gave me some good reasons. I did not feel like blaming them, but what they said made me think. I saw there must be something wrong. . . By and by new ideas came to my mind and I believed I saw what was the trouble." Then and there he set himself to demonstrate that the Christian life, the life of love and hope and faith, the life of growth and beauty and joy, was not something "hard," which could only be accomplished by pain and struggle and sacrifice, but the natural, normal life of every human soul because it is the life which has vital union with God and his Son, Jesus Christ,—the life "which lives in him." How he succeeded in making this deep spiritual truth clear to the mind of youth is a most interesting and significant story.

The initial movement was to have some special meetings with the Los Angeles group, holding them at the close of the day-school sessions and on Saturdays. Mr. Cook had an especially happy way with boys and girls, and they were quick to recognize and respond to his warm friendliness and absolute sincerity. In talking to them he used the simplest language but was never guilty of "talking down to his audience," a thing which youth instantly detects and hotly resents. Of these gatherings he says,

"I had so much to tell that I could not tell it all in one or two meetings. It was all so new, and I wanted to be sure I had time to tell it just right. I wanted to be certain the boys and girls understood me and had time to think about it all."

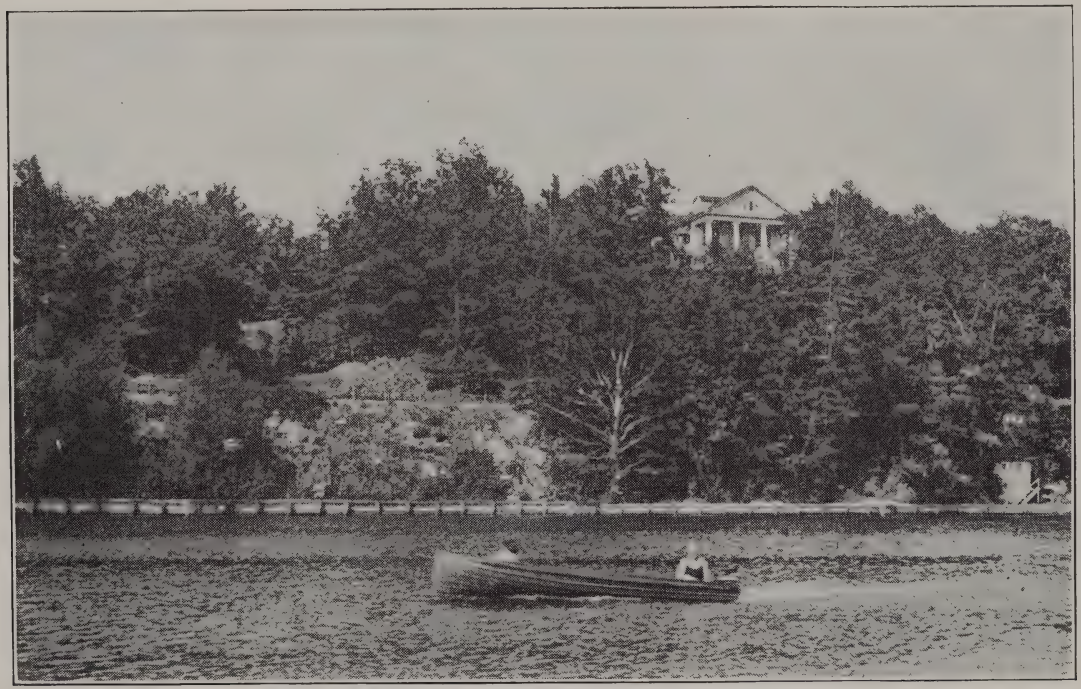
Unlike some eminent evangelists, Mr. Cook never undertook to stampede his hearers toward the goal he desired them to reach, knowing that unless the Gospel message appeals to a man's intelligence the emotional reaction to it is apt to be short-lived. He would not violate the free will of his hearers, not even to

" bring them to the altar." He did, however, in his own inimitable way, succeed in convincing his young friends of the reasonableness of the Lord's requirements in the matter of the Christian life. As he says, " The young people were delighted. Before the meetings were half over they began to try the new plan of which I told them. It worked splendidly, and many of them grew to be very much happier."

How the ring came to be chosen as the emblem of the I. A. H. Circle cannot be better told than in Mr. Cook's own words. He was again a well man and was contemplating a return to the East. He had grown to love the boys and girls to whom he had explained the way of life in his meetings, and was deeply interested in their future happiness and success. If they remembered the truths they had discovered with his help, all would be well. But —would they remember? Forgetting is so easy! This he knew from his own experience.

" One day as I was riding down town, thinking about the school and about forgetting, I said to myself, ' Did I forget when I was a

A Close-up of the Summer Home near Saugatuck, Michigan.



A View of the Summer Home from the Kalamazoo River.

boy? What did I do about it?' I began to think back. Yes, I used to forget. There was the old schoolhouse where I had my first trouble about forgetting. The teacher had told me to bring something from home. When I came the next day she asked me for it. I had forgotten it. I was afraid she would whip me, but she did not. She saw how bad I felt about it, and said, 'Never mind, David; I will tie this bit of string around your finger, and then you won't forget.' And I did not. Should I have these young people wear strings on their fingers? . . What was a string on the finger like? Why, like a ring! . . When I reached my office I wrote a letter to Chicago, ordering three hundred rings—to be made purposely for me; something different from any other ring. I sent a drawing to be used in making the rings I wanted."

When the rings arrived Mr. Cook called his boys and girls together and told them he had something for them which, if worn as directed, would be the means of giving each "a charmed life,"—this being the phrase he used to describe what Paul calls a life "hid with

Christ in God." He spoke of the trouble which is caused by forgetting, and his great desire that they should remember what they had learned in the meetings which they had enjoyed together. He spoke of his boyhood experience and the thought that had come to him on his way down town. He showed them a little silver ring inscribed with the three letters which stood for the central truth of the charmed life, read the book of directions for wearing the ring and asked how many would like one. Every right hand was flung into the air; some who had not before taken a stand as Christians were most eager for the ring, feeling that with its help they would be able to remain faithful. Mr. Cook tells the story in simple but affecting words.

" I had taken with me an autograph album, and each of us put our names in this. Then we chose rings to fit, and I put one on each hand. As I did so, the one who wore the ring repeated three words. . . After all had received rings, we formed a circle, taking hold of hands, then sang a song that we loved very

Original Delta Alpha Class, Organized and Taught by Mr. Cook in the Late Nineties.

much. . . Still holding hands we asked God to bless our Circle."

When David C. Cook's first Sunday-school quarterly achieved such phenomenal success, he said to young Bent, his partner, *"I've got something."* He felt the same way about the I. A. H. Circle; he had discovered something which filled a definite need in young life and would be the means of accomplishing great good. As soon as he returned to Elgin, he set about developing the idea with characteristic thoroughness and attention to detail; *he never half-did anything,* and had little patience with slipshod methods in others.

He devised the scheme of holding a week's meetings for young people, though there really was never any age limit in the I. A. H. work; for little folks there were "Sunshine Meetings" in the afternoon, for those older the "Starlight Services" of the evening. The subjects were attractive without resorting to any claptrap of sensationalism; for example, one was *"Joy: a Grapevine Talk,"* with the note, "In this talk Mr. Cook will show a grapevine from the celebrated Camulos Rancho in

California, the scene of Helen Hunt Jackson's story 'Ramona.'" To illustrate each talk he had a series of paintings made, large enough so that they could be seen from a considerable distance; many of them were real works of art, the series on the amaryllis being especially beautiful.

In addition to the pictures, which were displayed from a large easel, Mr. Cook had for each address a number of what one of his assistants describes as "pointed sentences," printed on strips of cardboard and so used as to provide a very complete synopsis of each subject. For example, in the talk on "Sunshine," the central thought is, Jesus, the Light of the World, and the "pointed sentences" are:

Jesus Cares for Our Love.
Jesus Wants to Do Things for Us.
Jesus is a Joy Giver.
Jesus is the Truest Kind of Friend.
Jesus Wants to be a Very Personal Friend.
Jesus is Sorry with Us.
Jesus is Tender and Loving with Those Who are Bad.
Jesus Never Chides.
Jesus is Ever Seeking to Help.

As everyone was asked to bring notebook and pencil it was possible for each to preserve

the salient points of the several addresses for future reference and meditation. There was also a sort of "affirmation" which Mr. Cook used a great deal, and which he insisted on those who attended his meetings memorizing,—

"The bright is brighter than the dark is dark—and there's more of it."

For the I. A. H. meetings Mr. Cook enlisted a corps of musicians and trained workers who combined technical skill with a genuine interest in young people. Prof. Towne, of whom it was said, "He can make a wooden Indian sing," went with him as musical director and soloist. A girl cornetist who was the marvel of the time was one whose playing will never be forgotten because of its exquisite tone and expression. There were also assistants selected from the office personnel of the Publishing House, upon whose intelligent and sympathetic coöperation Mr. Cook knew he could rely. And lest the ordinary Sunday-school songbook should lack hymns which stressed the thought he desired to con-

vey, Mr. Cook himself wrote such words and set them to music!

The first meetings were held in the Methodist churches of Elgin, but at once leaped over denominational fences and spread like wildfire over the country. Mr. Cook was invited to hold a series in the Moody Church, Chicago, of which R. A. Torrey was then pastor, and did so with conspicuous success. This was duplicated at the Lincoln Avenue Church. Later came an invitation from the Baptist Young People's Union of Atlanta, Georgia, to hold a series of I. A. H. meetings in that city, in connection with an evangelistic campaign which was soon to be undertaken by D. L. Moody. Mr. Cook consented, and Mr. Moody was frequently on the platform at these services. Another interesting series was held at Toronto, Canada, and still another at Orleans, Nebraska, where it was felt to be one of the chief attractions of the Chautauqua Assembly held at that place. It was here that Mr. Cook met Lyman Bayard, whose work in religious pageantry is now so well and favorably

known, and persuaded him to join the musicians of the I. A. H. force.

At Orleans people came from a radius of one hundred miles to attend the meetings, which were held in a big tent. Families made it a summer holiday affair, coming in from the prairies in big wagons piled with camp equipment and provisions, prepared to stay a week and never miss a single service. In this they were providentially aided; the Nebraska "twister" which blew away the "big top" obligingly waited until the last service was over before doing so, and no one was seriously injured.

At this time Mr. Cook had with him a boy singer who had the face of a cherub and the voice of a seraph, but who was just plain boy otherwise. He was a model youth during the services, but when off duty he was what a good Scotch woman feelingly described as "a limb, if e'er there was ane." Perhaps because of the restrictions of his own youth, Mr. Cook had a theory that there should be no adult interference with the plans and projects of Young America; boys and girls were good and

true at heart, and would respond at once to a policy of confidence and sympathy. So the cherubic young imp had a very good time for awhile,—a much better time than anyone else in the company. Mr. Cook was consistent; he was trustful and sympathetic to the nth degree, but there came a time when even his patience was not proof against the pranks of his protégé. Then he turned to two of his assistants and spoke just four crisp words:

"Make that boy behave."

To their eternal credit be it said that they entered enthusiastically upon this assignment and obeyed their chief to the letter. That night it was a chastened and subdued cherub who sang with great feeling,

"With tear-filled eyes I look around,
Life seems a dark and stormy sea."

As the wearers of the silver ring scattered after the gatherings which had brought them so large a measure of help and inspiration, they naturally told their friends about them and the "Charmed Life" of companionship with Jesus. Presently letters began to come

into the Elgin office, asking about the I. A. H. Circle and the possibility of joining it. As it was manifestly impossible for Mr. Cook to give his whole time to holding meetings, he set about putting his talks in shape for publication in the form of seven "Letters." One letter was to be read each day, and made the subject of careful thought and earnest prayer. If, when all the letters were read, a person wished to join the I. A. H. Circle, a ring was sent and the name regularly enrolled to receive succeeding letters. *The rings were never sold.* The membership fee of ten cents barely covered the printing and mailing costs.

Mr. Cook wrote over one hundred letters, giving sane, practical advice on the many problems young people have to meet, on matters of personal religion and daily life. Not satisfied with these general messages, he established what may be called a Personal Service Bureau, and invited the members of the Circle to write him frankly about their troubles. In one way, the response to this almost broke his heart, so great was the spiritual distress revealed. There were boys and girls

caught in the net of harmful habits; men and women filled with remorse for some sin of the past and in doubt as to the duty of confession; Sunday-school teachers who had lost their Christian faith but who hesitated to do anything to unsettle the faith of others; drunkards longing to escape from their slavery; women who had given

> "the lilies and languors of virtue
> For the roses and raptures of vice,"

and realized, too late, the bad bargain they had made. Mr. Cook's office became a confessional where almost every sin in the category was revealed, and his advice sought as to how pardons and cleansing might be obtained. No inquiry that "rang true" was ever ignored. Thousands of people all over the country will testify to the help given them in their extremity by this wise great-hearted friend whom they never knew in person but whom they loved for his unfailing patience, sympathy, and understanding.

So great were the demands made on Mr. Cook's time and strength by the I. A. H. work

that he was finally forced to choose between it and the interests of the Sunday-school. He decided that the latter had the greater claim upon him, and little by little withdrew from the former by delegating the personal service department to others, but the Circle widened of itself until it very nearly touched "earth's remotest bound." Requests for the letters and applications for membership continued to come in with every mail, though the work was not advertised, nor stressed in any way. In Alaska and in South Africa there are today men and women wearing the silver ring which reminds them "whose they are and whom they serve."

Recognizing in this unusual vitality a proof that the I. A. H. Circle still had a work to do, one of Mr. Cook's last acts as Editor-in-chief was to undertake the revision of the "Letters" written so long ago. In their new form they leave the Publishing House at the rate of fifty sets a day. He rests from his labors, but his work goes gloriously on.

A Summer in Colorado in the Early Days. Mr. Cook in Center of Group.

Chapter VI

Pioneering for the Sunday School

PERHAPS the finest expression of the pioneer spirit ever known is that which has been shown in the development of this continent. In a comparatively short space of time a wilderness reaching from ocean to ocean has been explored, subjugated and spanned by railroads and highways. Farms have been hewn out of the forest, orchards have arisen in the desert, great cities built in waste places and schools and colleges scattered broadcast from the Atlantic to the Pacific. In all this the work of the pioneer has been preëminent. It is he who has blazed the trail along which civilization has taken its westward way. All honor to the American pioneer—and the itinerant preacher who marched by his side, that he might not forget the faith of his fathers.

It was the pioneer spirit which moved Robert Raikes to gather a group of boys into the kitchen of a little house on Catherine Street in Gloucester, England, and later establish a

similar school for girls. Marion Lawrance says that the Free School System of England is traced directly to his work of teaching poor boys and girls to read and write. So, too, is England's "Penny Post"; Raikes secured a reduction of what were then prohibitive postage rates in order to send letters and leaflets in large quantities to the teachers in his schools! In our own day this spirit has moved men like Marion Lawrance, Henry J. Heinz and David C. Cook to painstakingly blaze the trail by which modern Sunday-schools may attain the heights of efficient service which these seers beheld. If Lawrance and Heinz gave themselves whole-heartedly to executive work, Mr. Cook did the same in his chosen field, that of editing and publishing supplies that should be available for the ever-expanding work of the Sunday-school. He seemed to have a sixth sense by which he knew what was to be needed, long before the need was apparent to others. Hence, many of his publications were in themselves pioneers.

At a time when Sunday-schools, from Bible class to tiny tots, studied the same lesson in

about the same way, memorizing Scripture verses and answering questions on the lesson text, he saw the need of grading his lesson helps to meet the mentality of the several departments. His first quarterly, published early in the '70's and intended for boys and girls, was the first attempt to adapt Sunday teaching to juvenile intelligence; up to that time it had been doctrinal and exegetical rather than educational and inspirational. That children and young people did grasp enough of it to be interested to search the Scriptures and find in them an incentive to noble living and a potent help in character building is but another proof of the vitality of truth; long ago it was said of the word of God, " It shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

While one lesson text was used for all grades, the treatment was different; little folks were not expected to wrestle with theological questions which were often too profound for their grandparents. In this departure Mr. Cook felt that he was carrying

out the Pauline program of feeding " with milk " those who were not yet able to digest and assimilate stronger spiritual food. *1 Cor. 3: 2.*

A second bit of Sunday-school pioneering was the issuing of separate story papers for teen-age boys and girls. Previous to this Mr. Cook was publishing a number of papers adapted to the religious needs of the family, ranging from " Church and Home " for adults to " Dew Drops " and " Little Learners " for children of Primary age. Gradually he came to feel that while some boy-and-girl interests are similar, there are others—and those of first importance—which must be dealt with separately. So, the better to serve the youth of the land, there was a reorganization of papers, a recasting of house policy and a re-alignment of writers which resulted in the publication of two fine papers, each adapted to the needs of its special group, " The Boys' World " and " The Girls' Companion." The popularity they at once achieved and have steadfastly maintained shows how accurate was Mr. Cook's " diagnosis of the case."

To Marshall Hudson, probably, belongs the honor of discovering the greater efficiency of the organized class, but Mr. Cook was the first publisher to back the movement, throwing all the weight of his personal influence and powerful organization on the side of what he believed to be a wise and timely step. In this connection Marion Lawrance wrote him, " While others dream, you do things, and in this case you are blazing the way in which others will gladly walk in later years." He spared neither time nor money to promote the Adult Bible Class Movement, publishing one monthly magazine for members of such classes and another for teachers, and getting out all sorts of needful supplies, besides some which were incidental but attractive; there were class secretaries' requisites,—triplicate record books, invitation post cards and follow-ups of all kinds, card indexes and wall mottoes, besides banquet programs, suggestions for place cards and room decorations. Also, there were class buttons, ready made or made to order, pins, pennants, and sleeve-bands. Any device which had been tried out

and found to be an aid in promoting enthusiasm, class spirit, and coöperation, Mr. Cook seized and adapted to the use of the organized class, so that W. N. Hartshorn, at that time chairman of the Executive Committee of the International Sunday School Association wrote him, saying, "Please accept my appreciation of the splendid work you are doing in the interest of the Adult Bible Class Movement." In later years Mr. Cook used to say, "Taking up the cudgels for the A. B. C. cost me $50,000—*and was worth it!*"

"Talk about A. B. C.'s!" said Prof. H. H. Hamill at a Michigan State Sunday School Convention, "don't you know that the A. B. C. movement is the greatest that has come into the Sunday-school in twenty-five years?"

It was true,—and the man who put the move in the movement was David C. Cook.

The welfare of the adult class, however, was no dearer to him than that of the little people in the Primary department, and he was ever alert to suggestions which might make the child's study of the Sunday-school lesson more interesting and his attendance a

matter of choice rather than compulsion. Knowing that knowledge enters the mind by both "eye-gate and ear-gate," Mr. Cook did another fine piece of trail-blazing by issuing the first Transformation Picture Roll,—a series of large pictures illustrating the lessons of the quarter, so arranged that they can be changed to illustrate more than one lesson truth—enabling the teacher to present the lesson in the most attractive and helpful way. It is an invaluable help for both teacher and class. In addition to this, small cards are prepared on which the lesson picture and Golden Text appear on one side, and a very simple lesson story on the other. Children love these cards for their bright colors and as something "to take home." By their aid they are able to tell to father and mother the story of the day's lesson, and so unconsciously widen the circle of its influence.

Mr. Cook was also first to appreciate the fact that the problems of Sunday-school officers are quite different from those of teachers and class members. The superintendent has to devise ways and means of

gathering and holding an adequate teaching force. To do this he needs the full coöperation and sympathy of the pastor and church officials. As Marion Lawrance says, " It goes without saying that he should be a man of generalship, gumption, and grace; a leader and not a driver, a counselor and not a dictator." Yet most Sunday-school superintendents are not super-men, but " just folks," not always able to solve without assistance the problems which arise, on Sundays and weekdays, in connection with the duties of the office. The secretary and treasurer, too, while their work is more of routine character, may do much more for the school than keep an accurate record of attendance and collections. The song leader has also a definite and important work, though he does not always know it.

To strengthen the official force of the Sunday-school and make it more effective, Mr. Cook undertook the printing of an " Officers' Quarterly " quite early in his career as a publisher. In 1907, however, he took a long forward step by issuing a monthly called the

"Sunday School Executive," which he developed into a manual of working plans covering all departments of Sunday-school organization and management—for the superintendent, department superintendents, and all other officers of the school. It gives live items of Sunday-school news and inspiring class write-ups in addition to fine articles of general religious interest; and plans, plans, plans without number for increasing interest and efficiency in the local school. While the "Executive" recognizes and maintains the preëminence of Bible study and religious education in the Sunday-school, it shows how its scope may be widened to include philanthropy, patriotism, civic righteousness and all that goes to make up good citizenship in the community and brotherhood in the world. By its aid the Sunday-school superintendent and his assistants are enabled to make the membership doers of the word as well as hearers.

Still another pioneering achievement was the issuing of lesson helps and story papers especially adapted to the need of rural schools. Perhaps because Mr. Cook's per-

sonal experience as a Sunday-school teacher and superintendent had been with city schools, it did not soon occur to him that the ordinary Sunday-school supplies were better adapted to large and well-equipped schools than to those of the small town and the country crossroads. Lesson illustrations were taken from phases of life absolutely unfamiliar to the boys and girls from homes on the prairie or in the mountain valleys. Yet statistics showed that the great majority of Sunday-schools were in the country or country towns. They met in homes, schoolhouses and little churches where the Beginners Class was in the front seats and the Bible Class in the back. Classrooms were unknown. If there was an organ, as likely as not no one could play it. Songbooks were few, Bibles likewise. When Mr. Cook realized this condition he was challenged by the thought that there were Sunday-school workers who could carry on in spite of such disadvantages. He resolved to help them, and with this in mind published " The Master Quarterly," in which the Sunday-school lessons were developed in

what may be called a rural atmosphere, and illustrated by means of incidents and activities familiar to country life.

This was soon followed by a story paper called " Countryside," which stressed a united family interest in church and Sunday-school and featured the pleasures and benefits of country life. The best rural specialists of the country were secured as contributors to carry out Mr. Cook's policy of providing the farm home and the country Sunday-school with entertainment of their own; they were also expected to awaken and foster the finest country life ideals, spirit and sentiment.

With " The Master Quarterly " and " Countryside " there was provided a special line of country Sunday-school requisites,—the Made-on-purpose Supplies. This included a song-book, " Countryside Songs," a book of directions for putting on Bible pageants, superintendent's, secretary's and teacher's manuals, Cradle Roll and birthday equipment and record books for the Home Department visitor. There were also devices for raising money, plans for holding farmers' institutes, com-

munity sings, socials, picnics, etc. The response to Mr. Cook's advance into this hitherto untried field was almost instantaneous, and in a short time nearly a quarter of a million people were using these supplies.

"First in war, first in peace and first in the hearts of his countrymen," runs the familiar quotation about George Washington. Of David C. Cook, the Sunday-school pioneer, it might justly be said, "First to see the need, first to devise the remedy, and first to put it within general reach." To do this he oftentimes had to face determined opposition, risk his personal fortune and endure the jibes of those who misunderstood his motives. To such men Ozora S. Davis pays a deserved tribute in the poem, "Courage."

"I love the man who dares to face defeat
And risks a conflict with heroic heart;
I love the man who bravely does his part
Where right and wrong in bloody battle meet.

"When bugles blown by cowards sound retreat,
I love the man who grasps his sword again
And sets himself to lead his fellowmen
Far forward through the battle's din and heat.

"For he who joins the issue of life's field
Must fully know the hazard of the fray,
And dare to venture ere he hope to win;
Must choose the risk and then refuse to yield
Until the sunset lights shall close the day
And God's great city lets the victor in."

Three Generations—David C. Cook, Sr., David C. Cook, Jr., David C. Cook, III.

Grandchildren—All Life Members of the Young People's Branch Foreign Missionary Society —Methodist Episcopal Church.

Chapter VII

Characteristics

POSSIBLY no two great men are cast in the same mould. Some excel because of the strong predominance of one characteristic, others because they possess many fine qualities in symmetrical proportion. None are without their weaknesses,—the little human frailties which assure their fellows that they are men and not demigods. According to a familiar saying, " Some men are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them." Whatever of truth or error there may be in the statement, no one who reads the life story of David C. Cook will feel that he belongs in the first or third class. The measure of greatness which was his he won by sheer force of character.

The analysis of his character is not a task to be lightly undertaken. Nor are the findings in the case likely to meet with the universal approval of his friends and associates. A many-sided man, one person saw him from

an angle which was not discerned by another, though the two might know him equally well. Hence it has seemed best not to trust the judgment of one person in this matter, but to gather the opinions of many and present them without any attempt to draw deductions or conclusions. "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety," runs an ancient proverb; so, perhaps, we shall find in this consensus of opinion a greater measure of truth about the character we are studying than could be otherwise obtained.

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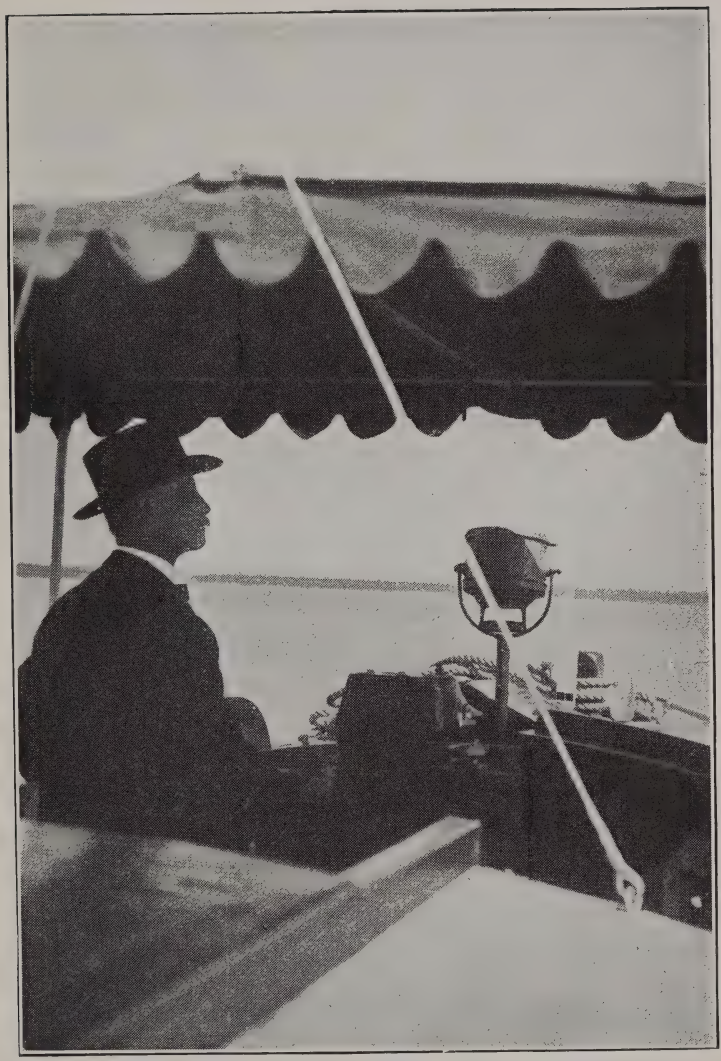
"Mr. Cook's outstanding characteristic?" repeated the man who was first approached on this subject. "Well—I don't just know; seems to me he was most all outstanding. I knew him in a business way, principally, and I guess the thing I've noticed oftenest and wondered at most was the way he always gave the other fellow the benefit of the doubt. You know it sometimes happens that the terms of an agreement can be understood two ways. If this proved to be the case in any of his deals, Mr. Cook never insisted on the inter-



Mr. Cook at His Favorite Pastime—Cruising.

pretation which would be most to his advantage. He'd say, 'Well, now, maybe he understood it the other way. Let's see how it will work out along that line.' Mighty fair-minded man, Mr. Cook."

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"I never knew him to give up a thing he once undertook," said one who has been on the Editorial Staff for many years. "Talk about tenacity! He had the bulldog grip, all right. Once he made up his mind that a certain project should be put through, and that it was up to him to do it, he never dropped it, or turned to the right hand or the left, *until it was done*. For the time, nothing else existed. He wanted a clear track to his goal, and by one way or another he'd make it. People speak slightingly of 'a single-track mind,' but in his case it brought results."

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"Mr. Cook was a great believer in preparedness," said another member of the Staff with a smile. "He had the faculty of looking at a

proposition from all sides, and making ready for all sorts of emergencies which might arise. One of the secrets of his success was this thoroughness in preparation. There were no details neglected—no loose ends over which to trip when once he'd entered the race."

Mr. Cook once told a story about himself which illustrates how this characteristic operated. It was during the time when he was fighting to save from utter ruin the business which he had built up so painstakingly. On a certain day he was to meet the bank officials to show his books and make a statement of the Company's assets and liabilities.

"Those were the days before flying machines and automobiles," he said with a reminiscent chuckle. "We still depended on old Dobbin to get us where we wanted to go between trains. I knew I might need to get to Geneva (the County Seat) in a hurry, so before I went to the bank I telephoned the livery stable for a horse and buggy—a good horse, I said—to be brought to the bank and hitched in front of the door. The rig stood there most

of the afternoon. I didn't need it, but if I had needed it, *it was there.*"

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"Mr. Cook was a wonderful judge of character," said a friend thoughtfully. "He was very seldom mistaken in his estimate of men and women. Then, too, he not only knew people for what they were, but for what they might become. He had a peculiar faculty of detecting hidden powers and possibilities in people and bringing these out where they would grow and bear fruit. More than one errand boy he made go to night school and helped along until he was fit to take a position in the Main Office. If he found a person who had ideas, but little ability to express them, he'd send the manuscript back with a criticism so clear and kindly that the writer was encouraged to try again and almost invariably made good."

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"The dominant trait of the man I knew," said one who had known Mr. Cook intimately for a number of years, "was his power of concentration and his undying enthusiasm to

push ahead. His was the *wisdom to see* and the *ability to do,* and nothing daunted him. If there was an obstacle in his path and he couldn't go over or around it, *he'd go through it.*"

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"Mr. Cook knew how to use time and to save it," said a man who holds a responsible position in the Main Office. "He gave me a lesson on that once which I've never forgotten, though it was many years ago. I was in the habit of running up to his office a good many times a day, to consult him on details of the business,—important ones they were, too. One day he said, calling me by name, 'Sit down; I want to tell you something. I had a deal on for some Chicago property last week. It was a pretty big deal, running into six figures. Before I went in to close it, I made out a questionnaire in triplicate. I kept a copy, gave one to the lawyer, and another to the man I was doing business with. We went through the list together, and closed the deal in just one hour. It's a pretty good plan. You try it out, and see if you don't think so.'

Mr. Cook and Grandchildren Feeding Pigeons.

"After that," said the man of responsibility, "I didn't do so much running up and down stairs—and I accomplished a lot more work."

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"If 'Genius is an infinite capacity for hard work,' Mr. Cook was the greatest genius I ever knew," said an editor tersely. "Eight hours a day for us; nobody knows how many for him. Many a time when I've been nervous and ready to quit, the shadow of his gray head against the office door has held me steady on the job."

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"He was a great man; a genius, perhaps," said one who stood by his chief with unfaltering loyalty for over twenty years, "but he didn't know how to play. I wish,"—a little sadly—"he had known; maybe he'd still be here."

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"Vision!" was the prompt answer of another member of the Staff. "Foresight; call it by whatever name you choose, but to me he seemed to have an almost uncanny sense of

knowing what was coming next. It was this faculty, I suppose, which made him so successful in his Sunday-school pioneering. When the time came that a certain thing was needed he was ready to supply the demand, because long before he had known it would come and prepared for it."

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"I'd like to stress the personal interest he took in the people who worked with and for him," said one who deserves to be numbered as one of the "Old Guard" of the Cook Publishing Company. "I remember we once had in the editorial department a very bright and capable young stenographer. Her mother had died when she was a little girl and she had been brought up by her father. She loved him devotedly and he was a brilliant man, but, unfortunately, an infidel and very outspoken in his disbelief. She found herself in strange waters when she took up our work; her questions were amazing and amusing. One morning Mr. Cook called her to his room and kept her there until noon. When she came out she said to me, 'What do you think!

That busy man has spent the whole morning trying to make a Christian out of ME!' Possibly the fact that he took a personal interest in her welfare and was willing to give his time and effort to secure it made more of an impression upon her than what he said, but in time she did become a very happy Christian."

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"Well," said another member of the Old Guard, a trifle reluctantly, "I 'most hate to tell you what I thought the strangest thing about Mr. Cook. He was a big man, you know; big every way. I never could understand why he was so reserved, so kind of shy, you might say. He wasn't a good mixer; yet he liked folks—he really did, but he couldn't show it. Kindest heart of any man I ever knew, and always doing a good turn for somebody, but if you tried to thank him he acted so uncomfortable you just didn't know whether to go ahead or back out of his office."

In line with this is a story told by a Chicago reporter. There was to be a big reception at the Cook home in Elgin, and he had been sent out to cover it for one of the city papers. His

train was late, and he arrived after the receiving line had scattered. The big rooms were filled with people who were laughing, talking, and having a very good time. No one noticed the reporter's entrance and he wondered how he was to get a " line " on the function. Standing in a corner was a small, gray man who was watching the crowd and looking as though he wished himself somewhere else. To him went the reporter with his tale of woe, concluding,

" If you've been here all evening and can tell me something about the doings I'll be much obliged. Big party?"

" Yes," said the small gray man, and the reporter made notes which should next day appear on the society page as " important social function " and all the usual frills. Then, with the laudable desire to add " human interest " to the write-up he said,

" Maybe you know this man Cook. They say he's quite a character. Poor boy who's made his pile, and all that sort of thing. A religious guy, too, I understand,—teaches in Sunday-school and is a pillar in the church.

At Play with His Grandchildren.

Sounds like good stuff. Tell me what you know about him."

The small gray man hesitated and looked unhappy, but, like the "Ancient Mariner," the reporter had "fixed him with his glittering eye," and there was no escape.

"I'm Mr. Cook," he said wearily—and to this day the reporter is unable to tell how he "made his get-away."

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It would be possible to extend the list indefinitely, but is it necessary? Some one will want to add, "He was an independent thinker"; another, "He was a tireless student"; still another will remember his originality and say, "He had a creative mind and was remarkable for resourcefulness." Each is right; all are right, and the blending of these traits made up a most remarkable personality, one to whom men and women unconsciously gave their best of thought and effort, perhaps because they knew he expected the best from them. He was chary of praise; a word of commendation was something to be long remembered. He was a severe critic, but his

criticism was always constructive and he held himself rigidly to the standards he set up for others. Fair-minded, far-sighted, a man of vision and brain and heart, the embodiment of steadfast purpose and tireless energy—that was David C. Cook.

Chapter VIII

Sunset

"He who hath braved Youth's dizzy heat
Dreads not the frost of Age,"

says Walter Savage Landor. This was eminently true in Mr. Cook's case. He crossed the allotted span of threescore years and ten cheerfully, and entered upon what he sometimes spoke of as "borrowed time" with the same intention of making the most of it which characterized his earlier life. Every day saw him in his office; every noon found him out in the air for a short walk; every night he returned to his home for a simple dinner and an hour or so of reading before going early to rest. If sleep did not come to him he accepted wakefulness philosophically, drew tablet and pencil from under his pillow and let his mind have its way until it was ready to suspend operations.

About this time he became interested in developing a system of religious education based on the findings of Dewey, Boraas and other well-known educators. These princi-

ples had already been successfully applied to public school education, and Mr. Cook felt that what was valuable in this field would be equally worth while in the Sunday-school. After wide reading and correspondence he developed the Problem Discussion Plan, which combined Bible study and the discovery of the ethical principles suggested by the lesson text with the expression of the student's mental reaction to these principles. Accepting Dewey's epigram, "Telling is not teaching," at its full value, he sought to discourage the lecture method, so much in favor with enthusiastic teachers and indolent classes, and substitute one which stimulated original thought on the part of individual members.

At first he insisted that the Problems submitted for discussion should be "two-sided," in order that Sunday-school boys and girls might be trained to think on both sides of a question. This brought upon him much criticism and some ridicule, but he kept serenely on his way, and by degrees introduced the plan into all his publications. The results, as reported by teachers everywhere, were sur-

prising, and justified Mr. Cook's faith in the mental alertness of Sunday-school scholars. Here again he did a valuable piece of Sunday-school pioneering, for today one can hardly pick up a denominational quarterly of any kind without finding in it discussion questions more or less closely modeled on those he devised.

While carrying on this difficult and extensive project he undertook another responsibility so heavy that those who were watching with some anxiety his whitening hair and slowing step wondered how he could ever carry it. Mr. Cook had for many years been an active member of the First Methodist Church of Elgin, serving on its Official Board and as Superintendent of its large Sunday-school until, at his request, he was made Consulting Superintendent and others assumed the active work of the office. The church felt that it needed a new building and Mr. Cook was asked to serve as Chairman of the Building Committee.

Did Mr. Cook see in this a providential opportunity to visualize his ideals of Sunday-

school equipment and efficiency? At any rate, he accepted the position and entered upon the discharge of its duties with characteristic thoroughness. He personally inspected all plans submitted, and at last recommended one which made ample provision for the welfare of the Sunday-school without detracting in the least from the dignity and beauty which a church edifice should possess.

Those were busy days in the offices of the Cook Publishing Company, when the members of the Staff rallied to support their chief in this new enterprise, relieving him as far as possible, that he might the more easily carry on the building project to which he had set his hand. From the day the steam excavators began tearing down the walls of the old church until the beautiful new building was dedicated Mr. Cook was the busiest man in the city. He spent hours in conference with members of his own committee, and was always on call for consultation when other chairmen were in difficulties. He gave and received innumerable telephone calls. He made flying trips to Chicago and other cities to see how

The New First M. E. Church, Elgin, Illinois.

certain innovations suggested by the architects stood the test of usage. Nothing was left to guess-work or supposition; the Chairman of the Building Committee made sure of his ground before he took any important step.

Slowly the walls of Bedford stone rose above the massive foundations. The interior finishing and furnishing was completed and an organ of marvelous tone and power was installed, and at the dedication service the man who had been so largely responsible for bringing all to pass could look about him and feel that his work had been "very good." To many who look at it from day to day it speaks eloquently of him and his life,—solid, substantial, possessing dignity without ostentation, and above all a slender, heaven-pointing spire,—the aspiration for better things which dominated every thought and act.

Mr. Cook's appearance and general attitude toward life at this time cannot be better described than by the lines of Richard Burton:

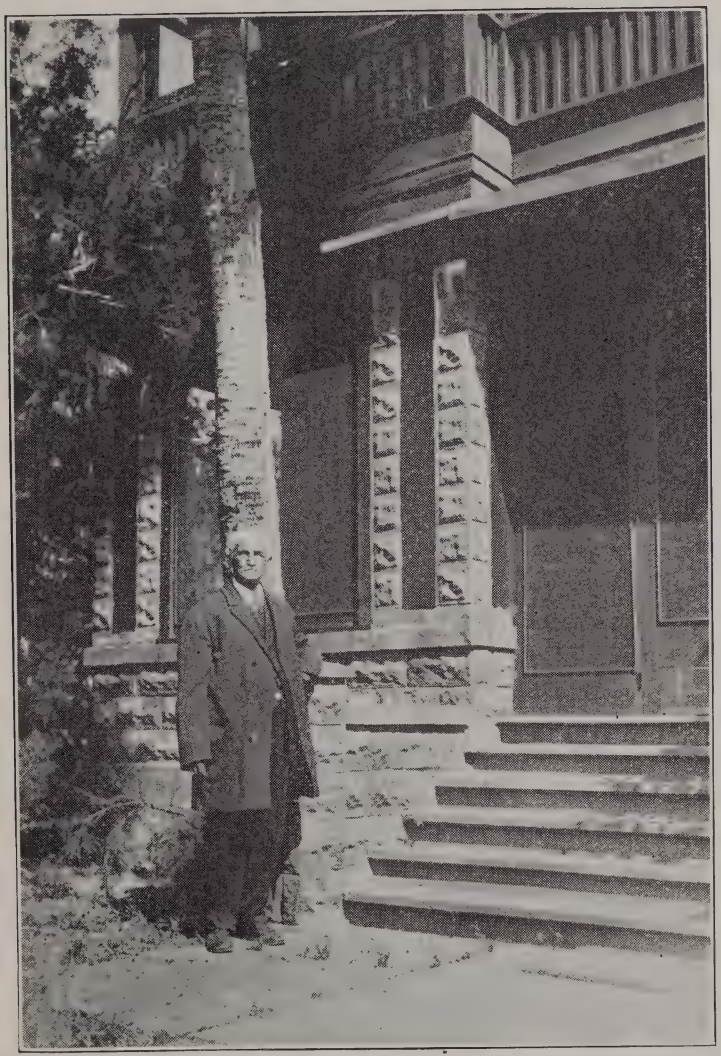
"He looks not holy; simple in his belief;
His creed for mystic visions do not scan;
His face has lines cut there by others' grief,
And in his eyes is love of fellow-man.

"Not self nor self-salvation is his care;
He yearns to make the world a sunnier clime
To live in; and his mission everywhere
Is strangely like the Christ's in olden time.

"No medieval mystery, no crowned,
Dim figure, halo-ringed, uncanny bright;
A Modern Saint! A man who treads earth's ground
And ministers to men with all his might."

A year went by,—two, three. Then it began to be noticed that the noonday walks were shorter, his step slower. He had increasing difficulty in mounting the stairs to his office. By and by there came a morning when the Staff listened in vain for his well-known tread in the hall. Word was passed around that Mr. Cook would not be in that day. He never came again.

For some weeks he continued to transact business through his secretary and stenographer, who visited him at his home when he so desired. They returned to the office with grave faces, though with the unvarying statement that the Chief was entirely cheerful in spite of increasing weakness. All that love, money, and scientific skill could devise was done to prolong the life which seemed too



Mr. Cook During His Last Winter at the Maximo (St. Petersburg, Florida) Home.

useful to earth to be yielded to heaven, but without avail.

The vital flame flickered more and more uncertainly, and as a last resort his physicians decided to try blood transfusion. Mr. Cook consented readily enough, and showed considerable interest in the mode of procedure, which was something new in his experience. The necessary tests were made, and on the morning of July 30th everything was in readiness. Mr. Cook made some whimsical comments on the final details of preparation. As these were completed and transfusion was actually accomplished, he looked up with a smile and the sudden lighting of the eyes which his friends knew and loved.

"Why," said he, "I feel better already!" —and was gone.

"Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

"But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

"Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell
When I embark;

"For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar."

Chapter IX

Appreciations

WHEN the news of Mr. Cook's death flashed east and west over the wires, responses came from all parts of the country. There were scores of telegrams of condolence to Mrs. Cook and the two sons, George E. and David C., Jr. In many instances these were followed by letters more fully expressing sympathy for those bereaved, and regret at the loss of a valued personal friend. All stressed his work as a leader in Sunday-school work; many emphasized traits of character which had made him what he was.

As these messages were read, the outstanding fact was that to " all sorts and conditions of men " Mr. Cook had been an inspiration to braver and better living. Not only had his publications raised the standard of general intelligence on matters of religious faith and doctrine, but his sane and practical advice on things pertaining to everyday life had been

of inestimable benefit to hundreds of people, young and old. From wind-swept Minnesota prairies, from cabins in the Cumberlands, from hamlets in the north woods and California fruit ranches the message was the same,—"*He helped me.*"

To show the extent of Mr. Cook's personal influence and the universal sorrow felt at his passing, extracts from a few of the many letters received are given in this chapter, that the reader may draw his own conclusions as to the work and worth of the man who was not only "the friend of the Sunday-school," but the friend of mankind everywhere.

From the late Bishop J. C. Hartzell.

My dear Mrs. Cook:—

Your letter telling of the continued illness of Mr. Cook, and of your anxiety and consequent increased responsibilities, had been read and reread, and then so soon your son's telegram of his passing away greatly affected me. Immediately on receiving the message I telegraphed—"You and your loved ones have my profound sympathy in this great sorrow that has come to you and them. Letter follows." My constant prayer shall be that divine comfort and strength may be yours hour by hour, and that your son who has been so large a factor in the complicated business may be divinely led.

From W. C. Pearce, Vice President World's Sunday School Association.

My dear Mrs. Cook:—

. . . Your loss is mine, too. I could not have loved him more if he had been my blood kin. He was so kind and so true to me, and to all Christian ideals he was so loyal. . . . May the dear Master make me worthy of his friendship, and keep me loyal to the ideals for which he stood. . . . Please send to me any news notices of his life.

From Amos R. Wells, author and editor.

My dear Mr. Cook:—

. . . Your father's career was indeed a most notable one. He did a great work for the Sunday-school. He was a pioneer in many directions, and he kept always in the van. I am only one of many hundreds of writers who found their first field and initial encouragement in his periodicals, and the inspiring association thus begun has continued for forty years. It is indeed fortunate that your father has such a successor as you are, and no one doubts that you will carry on his work to ever enlarging usefulness.

From Lowell H. Coate, Pastor Community Methodist Church, Piru, California.

Dear Mrs. Cook:—

The people of Piru Church and community were saddened last Sunday to learn of the passing of Mr. Cook, their beloved friend and founder of both the church and town of Piru. We have definitely arranged for a special memorial service for him in the church which he built here in Piru. The service will be held on Sunday evening, August 14th, and any message which you would like to send for that occasion will be

especially appreciated. So much and so favorably is he remembered here by both the friends of the church and the community, that there is a definite proposal to name the church in his honor, to be known as the "David C. Cook Memorial Church of Piru." This suggestion has received a most hearty approval from all concerned, and as soon as the church is remodeled and completely renewed, it probably will be rededicated under its new name.

From Hon. Will H. Brown, founder of the World-Wide Loyal Movement.

Dear Mr. Cook:—

. . . I find myself wondering if any other one person in the United States has influenced so many lives for good in the last few decades as your wonderful father. To me it is bewildering even to try to imagine the vastness of that influence. . . .

From George P. Bent, former business associate. (Telegram to Mr. Cook.)

Most sincere sympathy to you all, in which my wife joins. Your father was my employer, and friend since 1870. I was his groomsman at his marriage to your mother. We deeply mourn his going. Mrs. Bent and I send sympathy to your mother.

From Hugh S. McGill, General Secretary International Council of Religious Education.

My dear Mr. Cook:—

I was away attending one of our International leadership schools when the news came of your father's death. He was a broad-minded man and possessed of a most magnanimous Christian spirit. I assure you I

admired him greatly as one of the finest Christian business men I have ever known. We appreciate more than we can express the bequest left to the International Council by your father.

From Harold G. Lawrance, Son of the late Marion Lawrance.

Dear Mr. Cook:—

I should like very much to meet you. My father greatly admired and loved your father. I have heard him speak many times in a highly appreciative way of him and his company.

From Carrie B. Leonard, Member of Staff from 1889 to 1928.

After the lapse of years what stands out preëminent in my recollections of Mr. Cook, is that he demonstrated by word and life, by speech and pen, that the gospel of Jesus Christ, GOD IS LOVE, has not lost its pristine power.

From Bishop Edwin H. Hughes.

Dear Mrs. Cook:—

I am so sorry to hear that Brother Cook has gone from us. It will be hard to think of Elgin without his presence; and hard to think of all the world-wide Sunday-school service, apart from his work. While your grief is great, the compensations are many; and God's ways of comfort are never small. I am just leaving for Camp Meeting work over Tuesday in Eastern Ohio. But I felt that I could not go without sending this word of sympathy for you all, and this word of tribute to a good servant of Jesus Christ. God be with you!

From Fleming H. Revell, Publisher.

My dear Mrs. Cook:—

The sad news of your great loss has just reached me. I hasten to assure you of my deep sympathy, for our acquaintance with you and your esteemed husband dates back for more than half a century. Both you and I can readily recall the beginning of our several efforts in lines that have since been greatly enlarged and we sincerely trust have been of some real service. This is eminently true of the work of your husband in which work you personally had so large a part. I pray you may be fully sustained in your bereavement. Be assured I feel deeply for you.

From Bishop Thomas Nicholson. (Telegram.)

Deeply moved by news of your father's home-going. Regret we cannot be present Monday to pay in person our tribute of esteem and appreciation of his fruitful life of service. Please extend our fullest sympathy to Mrs. Cook and the family. Also extend sympathy of the National Officers of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society.

From Rev. Lyman R. Bayard, writer of religious pageants, etc.

Dear Mrs. Cook:—

A friend has sent me the newspaper clippings which tell of Mr. Cook's passing onward. Though it is fifteen years since I left Elgin, I feel a sense of personal loss in his going. It is not quite the same world any more. I owed a great deal of gratitude to Mr. Cook. He found me in Western Nebraska and transplanted me to his establishment where I found opportunity to develop my music to such degree as I attained in that field, and also found development in other lines which finally

brought me into the ministry. The association I had with him in his I. A. H. meetings was of large value, and through the sixteen years I worked for the Publishing Company, I thought of him not merely as an employer, but as a friend. Ever since I left for the ministry, I always thought of him as one to whom I could turn if there were ever any need. At the services in his memory there were a great company of mourners besides those whom you saw. There were the hosts that he befriended, and the vast number whom he helped, many of whom never saw his face. And all of us of that great invisible throng were full of sympathy for you of the family circle who had known him so much better than we had. It might be of interest to you to know that a certain side line of my ministry has been the writing of religious drama and pageantry. This has resulted in my becoming somewhat well known in church circles among people who are interested in this form of teaching. The impulses which resulted in this came to me while I was at the Publishing House, and Mr. Cook printed my first effort of this kind.

From Joseph Clark, D. D., New York State Sunday School Association.

My dear Mrs. Cook:—

Today's papers announce the passing of your husband. The Sunday-school world has lost its greatest promoter and philanthropist, and its largest publisher; the church one of its greatest Christians, Christianity one of its noted prophets, and childhood and youth one of their most devoted friends. "A prince this day has fallen in Israel." Personally I am bereft of one of my nearest, most beloved and respected friends. Mr. Cook was small in stature, but a giant in achievement; frail in body, but mighty in influence for good. He anticipated the development of Sunday-school specialized activities, and was in the field to meet their needs with specialized periodicals, before other publishing houses

sensed such needs. In this respect he was a pioneer. He was a genius in devising Sunday-school accessories. He kept his own counsel, and carried on his business in what he regarded as an open field, using none but accepted business methods to reach legitimate ends. He treated his employees so fairly that he never had a strike. He was an example of what a man can do who practices the principles of the kingdom of God in business, who does justly, loves mercy, and walks humbly with his God. "Seest thou a man diligent in business? He shall stand before kings."

From W. G. Landes, Formerly General Secretary World's Sunday-school Association.

My dear David:—

. . . I recall with great delight the experiences of the last few years of the 90's when I was associated with your father. The contacts of that time changed the whole trend of my life, and I am sure I would not be where I am had it not been for those years. . . .

From Allan H. Wilde, of the W. A. Wilde Company.

My dear Mr. Cook:—

We have just learned of your father's death, and my brother and I feel that we want to quickly send you a word of sympathy. I have not seen him for several years, but I know that in the earlier days my own father appreciated his friendship greatly. . . .

From Violet Moore Higgins, artist.

Dear Mr. Cook:—

A few days ago I learned of the death of your father, and I want to send you a few words of sympathy and regret. As we grow older, the people who stood out

against the background of our youth take on an institutional, almost imperishable quality. I recall vividly that in my little-girl days in my home town your father was one of the leaders. It must be a tremendous satisfaction to you to see the permanence and importance of the things he began and you are carrying on. . . .

From Mary Pressley, of the Charlotte News, Charlotte, North Carolina.

Dear Mr. Cook:—

. . . Though I never met your father personally, I feel that I, too, have a share in your loss. My first acquaintance with David C. Cook was made many years ago, when as a child I went to a little mission Sunday-school in a wee, bleak schoolhouse on the windswept prairies of Minnesota, and it has been a household word with us ever since. . . . I am glad you are planning to continue the work as he had outlined it, and I hope that you may be of equal service to the world.

From George N. Sleight, author and educator.

Dear David:—

Your telegram just received. . . . You have my sincerest sympathy in your loss. I have always most highly respected your father. It won't seem like coming back to the old Elgin, not to find your father there,—quiet, unassuming, but keenly and intensely aware of all that was going on. You and I know that he was one of the great men of this century. . . . Of course, life from now on far into the future will be different for you, but the memory of your father, his courage, his keen insight into the big problems of life, his never failing persistence, and most of all his unvarying kindness and patience, are things which will bring him

closer and closer to you. . . . To carry on your father's work will be to you an ever increasing joy, because it is a BIG work, and worthy a man's best efforts.

From Carolyn Sherwin Bailey, author.

Dear Mr. Cook:—

. . . Thank you so much for the photograph of your father; I have hardly ever seen a face with so marked a delineation of character. From a long editorial contact with the Cook Publishing Company I have realized the inspiration your father has been to you, and the comfort and help in coöperation you have been to him. This, it seems to me, is one of the proofs of the Life Everlasting. . . .

From John L. Alexander, of the American Youth Foundation.

My dear David C.:—

. . . I just want to drop you a note, expressing my sincere regret for the going home of your very able father. He will long stand in the history and thinking of the Sunday-school world as a man who dared big things, and hundreds and hundreds of places the world over will sincerely mourn his passing from these earthly scenes.

From Helen F. Huntington, writer.

Dear Mr. Cook:—

It was only yesterday I learned of the death of your father. . . . It was his Sunday-school papers and lesson helps, used in my first Sunday-school in North Georgia, that formed my earliest Christian ideals, the only permanent ideals of my life. Doubtless I am only one of tens of thousands influenced for good by his leader-

ship. One could hardly ask for a more enduring monument than the endless outreaching of a godly life.

From Roy J. Snell, writer.

Dear Mr. Cook:—

Please accept my sincere sympathy in regard to the passing of your father. He was indeed a great man. Few have done their generation so great a service. Beyond doubt his splendid spirit will still guide you in the task he has left for you to do.

From Harriet Lummis Smith, author.

Dear Mr. Cook:—

I want to thank you for the photograph of your father, which I prize very much, and for the inspiring account of his life which appeared in your local paper. I realized his ability, of course, but I had not realized before that he was of such heroic stuff; I have put the account away and shall preserve it carefully.

From a Friend in Coloma, Mich.

Dear Mr. David C. Cook, Jr:—

I am an old lady, nearing sixty, and have always been an interested reader of your papers. I was a pioneer child in Northern Michigan, where I walked two miles through a forest to Sunday-school, following a trail blazed by my father. . . . When I married I went farther into the North Woods, where there was neither Sunday-school nor day-school for our boy and girl. I wrote Mr. David C. Cook a letter, telling him how we missed these privileges, and he wrote me a fatherly letter, telling us to organize Sunday-school at the lumber camp settlement one and one-half miles away, and he would give us papers and leaflets free for three

months. . . . Our meeting place was the camp dining room. Our scholars were from the shanties of the mill workers and some lumber jacks from the camp. Thus we started a Cook Sunday-school in the woods of Maple Forest, Michigan. . . . Your father helped a great many schools in this way. He was a good man, and I am sure his son is like him.

Messages of Sympathy from I. A. H. Members.
From Namoo, Ala.

Dear Mr. Cook:—

As I read the sad news of the death of your father it hurt me so I could not help shedding tears. . . . He and I have been warm friends for nearly thirty years. I became a member of the Circle in 1899. Your father has been a pillar to me in many dark hours of trouble and sorrow. He did indeed live a charmed life. . . . His influence over me will last till my last day. . . .

From Tompkinsville, Ky.

Dear Mr. Cook:—

Although unseen, I claimed your father as one of my best friends,—one who in my greatest troubles always cheered me and by his sublime faith always inspired me with perseverance and hope. I hope the mantle of the father may fall upon the son.

From El Paso, Tex.

Dear Mr. Cook:—

I was much pained to learn of the death of your father. . . . I have always regarded him as one of the "Old Guard," along with Mr. Lawrance, Mr. Reynolds, Mr. Warren, Mr. Heinz, and a host of those who held aloft the banner of truth in the Sunday-school. . . . If everyone who has been helped by him should put a single blossom on his resting place, he would lie beneath a wilderness of flowers.

From Shawmut, Mont.

Dear Mr. Cook:—

I am very sorry that your father died. He must have been very wonderful, because he wrote such nice letters. My mother and I thought it would be nice for you to write another letter, something like the ones your father wrote, only have it tell about his life, and put your father's picture in it. After reading his letters we would like to know more about him. I received my ring, and hope I can use it as your father expected me to.

From the Official Board, Fire-Baptized Holiness Church of God in America.

A Royal Tribute.

Truly a prince has fallen in Israel. Our dear, honorable David C. Cook, one of the greatest editors in history. . . . We write to express our sympathy. He has given us an example of loving patience, a Christlike and unselfish spirit and a vital, simple faith in God. The simplicity of his life was worthy of our imitation. For twenty years has this Fire-Baptized Holiness Church Sunday School used his literature. We are voicing the sentiments of the whole F. B. H. movement when we say as some one said of Martin Luther, "The whole earth will be his sepulchre." Sleep on, dear editor, and take your rest.

Rev. W. E. Fuller, D. D. Bishop.
Rev. H. Walker, Pastor.
Bro. D. Kelly, Supt.
S. J. Belcher, Reporter.

From Chicago, Ill.

Dear Mr. Cook:—

I was so sorry to hear of your sorrow. My daddy passed away three years ago, and I can feel sorry for anybody that has sorrow too. But how good it is

they passed away Christians! . . . I find a great pleasure in reading the letters and wearing the ring.

From Greenville, Tenn.

Dear Mr. Cook:—

I have read all seven of the letters and I like them. I am a Christian, and I believe wearing the ring will be a help in serving the Lord. I promise to do all that is requested to do, and wish everybody could wear a ring. I am very sorry your father has passed away, but when one has got up as grand a thing as the I. A. H. Circle, what is our loss is God's gain. All who feel as I do about the Circle will feel that way.

From New York City.

Dear Mr. Cook:—

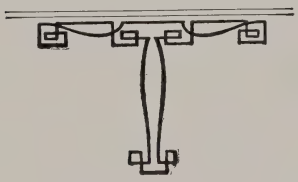
I wish to express my sincere sympathy for your recent bereavement. It is hard to give up those we love, but remembering that all is for the best, we ourselves grow stronger for the work of helping others. I hope you will gain true joy in taking up this work, which your father did so well.

From Bowling Green, Ohio.

Dear Mr. Cook:—

I learn with sorrow of the death of your father. I wish I could express in words the sympathy which I have for you. At the same time, it seems to me that the good which he did for humanity should help to comfort and cheer you.

"To live in hearts we leave behind
Is not to die."



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